Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

Volume XVIII, Issue No. 51 | WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 20, 2008 | www.saipantribune.com | 50¢

10 Anaks owners sue ex-board members for fraud. PAGE 2

NMC cites 2 possible reasons for its shaky position. PAGE 3

Labor clarifies transfer process

By AGNES E. DONATO
agnes_donato@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Department of Labor has clarified how foreign workers can transfer jobs under the new system.

Although consensual and expiration transfers have been eliminated, guest workers may still transfer from one employer to another, according to the department's progress report on the implementation of Public Law 15-108.

Kaipat

Deputy Labor Secretary Cinta Kaipat, the former lawmaker who sponsored the labor law in the 15th Legislature, prepared the report.

Under the new process, Kaipat said, a worker seeking to transfer jobs registers with the Division of Employment Services and is given the so-called "employer intent form."

The worker finds an employer will-

See LABOR on Page 4

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

A BOY'S BEST FRIEND
A child plays with his puppy at Marine Beach in Kagman.

Hotel occupancy up 5 percentage points

By MARK RABAGO
ASSISTANT EDITOR

Hotel occupancy in the 14-member Hotel Association of the Northern Mariana Islands saw a 5 percentage point increase last month to 77.31 percent compared to the 72.4 percent recorded in January 2007.

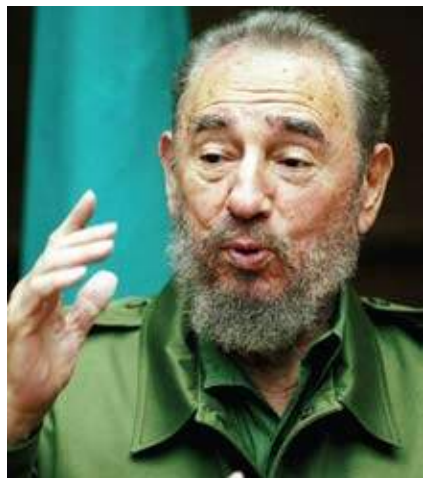
See HOTEL on Page 4

Fidel Castro resigns Cuban presidency

By ANITA SNOW
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

HAVANA (AP)—An ailing Fidel Castro resigned as Cuba's president Tuesday after nearly a half-century in power, saying he will not accept a new term when the new parliament meets Sunday.

See FIDEL on Page 4



AP

In a file photo Cuban President Fidel Castro gestures as he welcomes the president of Mali Thursday Sept. 4, 2003 at the Revolution Palace in Havana, Cuba.

Fitial, Tenorio to face US Senate panel

By AGNES E. DONATO
agnes_donato@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial and Resident Rep. Pete A. Tenorio will both testify at the Senate committee hearing on minimum wage next week.

The Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources will conduct the hearing to receive testimony on the impact of increased minimum wages on the economies of American Samoa and the Northern Marianas.

The hearing will be held on Thursday, Feb. 28, 2008, at 9:30am in Washington, D.C. (11:30pm on Saipan)

Fitial and Tenorio will join their counterparts from American Samoa—Gov. Togiola Tulafono and Rep. Eni F.H. Faleomavaega—at the hearing.

See FITIAL on Page 4

Visit us online @ www.saipantribune.com

OPINION METER

This week's poll:
Is the CNMI government doing enough to pursue corruption cases and other white-collar crimes on the islands?

Let your voice be heard! Go to www.saipantribune.com to cast your vote.

INSIDE

Recognition
The U.S. and the European Union's biggest powers quickly recognized Kosovo as an independent nation.

WORLD...Page 16

Devil Toad
A frog the size of a bowling ball, with heavy armor and teeth, lived among dinosaurs millions of years ago.

LIFE & STYLE...Page 18

Bombshell
Lindsay Lohan is following in the footsteps of the most famous blond bombshell of them all–Marilyn Monroe.

LIFE & STYLE...Page 19

Local

10 Anaks owners sue ex-board members for fraud

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Dr. Norma S. Ada and nine other owners of units in the housing complex known as Anaks Ocean View Hill Saipan in Puerto Rico have sued the former members of the Anaks homeowners association's board of directors for allegedly enriching themselves through fraud at the expense of the owners.

Dr. Ada's co-plaintiffs are Mary Asper, William R. Barrineau, Maria H. Zarzosa, Willi Gutowski, Anita Gutowski, attorney Eric W. Smith, Rhoda Smith, Jack Hardy, and Shan Ping Bacon.

They sued Masaji Nakamoto, Yoshio Arino, Namio Miura, Sumio Uchikawa, Anaks Resort Development Inc., Saipan Shangrila Resort Inc., All Nippon Airways Inc., JFE Shoji Holdings, Kawasho Real Estate Corp., Shimizu Corp., Hoyu House Co. Ltd., PHO TG Co. Ltd., Forty Love Co. Ltd., and 100 unnamed co-defendants.

The plaintiffs, through counsel Timothy H. Bellas, sued the defendants for breach of fiduciary duty, breach of contract, accounting, mandatory preliminary injunction, and breach of implied covenant of good faith and fair dealing.

The plaintiffs asked the Superior Court to declare that Anaks Resort Development Inc. is required to perform an accounting of prior year maintenance expenses and continue to do so during the remaining term of the agreement.

The plaintiffs asked the court to declare that none of the Nakamoto defendants should profit from the breach of their fiduciary duties owed to plaintiffs.

They demanded that the Nakamoto defendants must return any claim to Anaks or the Anaks Ocean View Hill's common areas in favor of plaintiffs and other owners.

The Nakamoto defendants—Masaji Nakamoto, Yoshio Arino, Namio Miura, and Sumio Uchikawa—were the previous members of the Anaks Ocean View Hill Saipan Homeowners Association board of directors.

The plaintiffs demanded damages, restitution, attorney's fees and court costs.

They asked the court to immediately stop the defendants from retaining AHA files, documents and funds and turning all of these items to the new board of AHA.

The plaintiffs also want the defendants to stop interfering with the duties and responsibilities of the current AHA board of directors and their functions.

Masaji Nakamoto, Yoshio Arino, Namio Miura, Sumio Uchikawwa (Nakamoto defendants) were the previous AHA board members up to the May 14, 2007 election of the new board.

Bellas said Anaks was owned on March 30, 2007 by three major Japanese corporations—All Nippon Airways, Kawasho Real Estate and Shimizu Corp.

Bellas said based on the financial resources and reputations of the three original corporations, they were able to construct and successfully market all 131 units of the property shortly after construction was completed in 1989.

After making substantial profits from the original sale of the units, the original three Anaks shareholders recently indicated that they want to divest themselves of their interests in Anaks.

Bellas said that, at an annual meeting of the owners held in Japan in August 2004, the owners were confronted with this disclosure.

Despite agreeing to the owners' conditions to transfer their interests in Anaks, Bellas said All Nippon Airways, KRE and Shimizu Corp. transferred all of their interests in Anaks to the Nakamoto defendants in March 2007.

"Neither Anaks nor the Nakamoto defendants provided any notice to the owners, whom the Nakamoto defendants were supposedly representing at the time, as the then board members of AHA, that the Nakamoto defendant acquired beneficial ownership of all of the shares of stock of Anaks," Bellas said.

"Not only did Nakamoto defendants pay nothing for the shares, but the Anaks corporate entity, in addition to the interests in real property consisting of the common areas of the [property]…, had cash assets in the amount of $1.5 million when the shares were given to the Nakamoto defendants," he said.

Bellas said an agreement arbitrarily set the maintenance fee at $395 a month per unit for the year 1990.

Despite such explicit provisions of the agreement, Bellas said, Anaks has never in the 18-year existence of the property provided any accounting to the owners to justify or adjust the amount of the monthly maintenance fee.

Instead, he said, Anaks has continued to charge the same $395 a month per unit for the last 18 years.

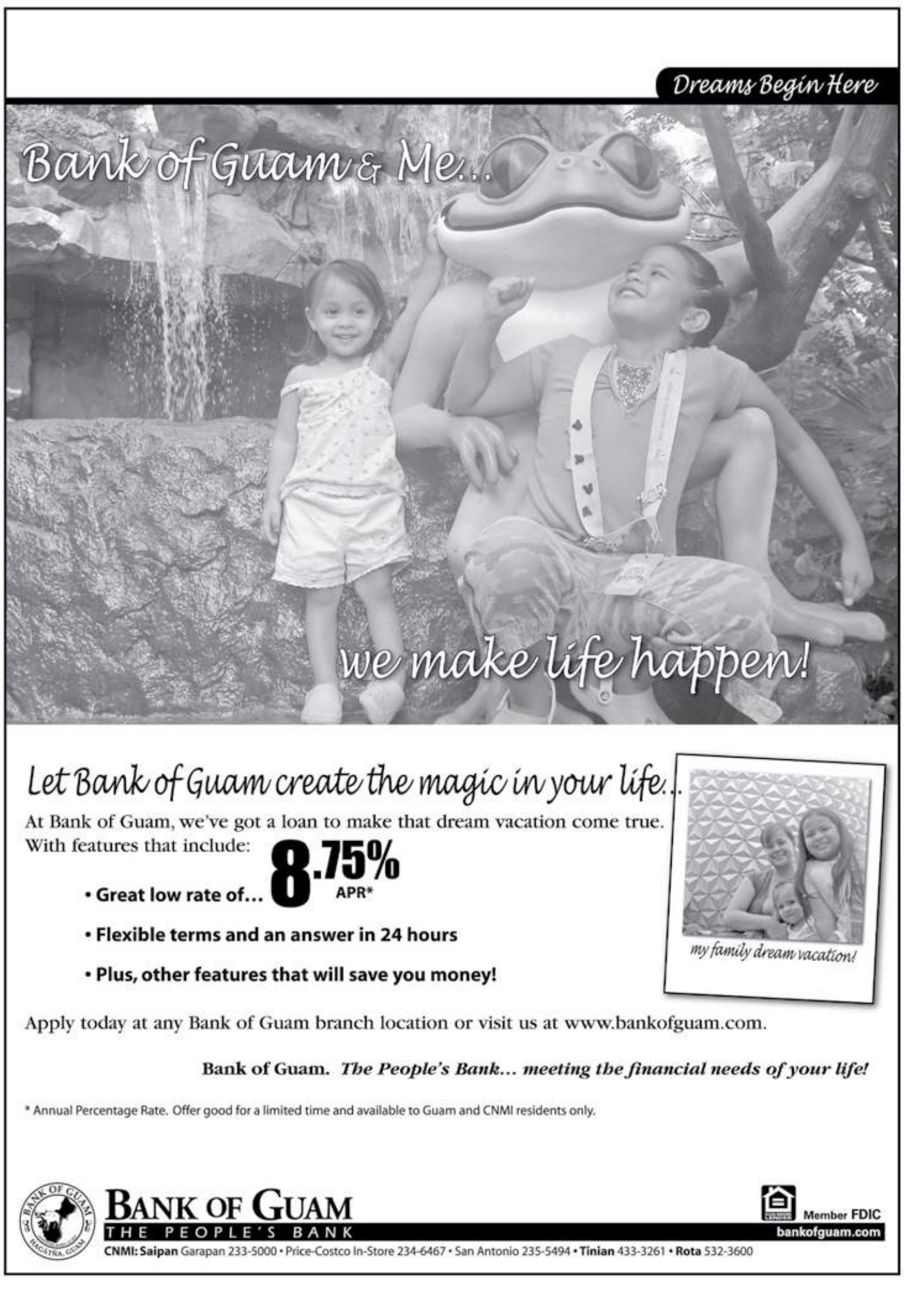
He cited that the Nakamoto defendants have acquired all of the Anaks shares by forming Shangrila, which is also a CNMI corporation.

Bellas alleged that Anaks contracted insider contractors for maintenance services because Anaks received payments or other consideration from these insider contractors.

In addition to acquiring the interests in Anaks, Bellas said, Nakamoto is now receiving a salary and other incidental expenses totaling $120,000 per year from Anaks, which is derived from the monthly maintenance fees paid by plaintiffs.

Despite no longer being board

See 10 ANAKS on next page


Dreams Begin Here
Bank of Guam & Me...
we make life happen!
Let Bank of Guam create the magic in your life...
At Bank of Guam, we've got a loan to make that dream vacation come true.
With features that include:
• Great low rate of... 8.75% APR*
• Flexible terms and an answer in 24 hours
• Plus, other features that will save you money!
my family dream vacation!
Apply today at any Bank of Guam branch location or visit us at www.bankofguam.com.
Bank of Guam. The People's Bank... meeting the financial needs of your life!
* Annual Percentage Rate. Offer good for a limited time and available to Guam and CNMI residents only.
BANK OF GUAM
THE PEOPLE'S BANK
Member FDIC
bankofguam.com
CNMI: Saipan Garapan 233-5000 • Price-Costco In-Store 234-6467 • San Antonio 235-5494 • Tinian 433-3261 • Rota 532-3600

DISCONNECTION NOTICE

PTI would like to remind its customers that payments not received by close of business on February 20th, will result in temporary suspension of all telephone services after 6:00 p.m. on that day. To prevent temporary suspension, customers must pay their bills on or before February 20th.

THIS WILL BE THE ONLY NOTIFICATION PTI CUSTOMERS WILL RECEIVE*.

Per an earlier announcement, PTI is no longer mailing out past due notices as of 11/01/06.

* You have the right to dispute this notice. You must state your claim in person or in writing no later than February 20th. You must pay any amount not in dispute to avoid disconnection. Payment denotes acceptance of all charges.

If you have questions regarding billing or service please call Customer Service at **682-4PTI (4784)** or visit our Customer Service Representatives at our Chalan Lau-Lau Office.

PTI Your connection to the world

NMC cites 2 possible reasons for its shaky position

By RIANNE PANGELINAN-BROWN
rianne_pangelinan@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Northern Marianas College cited two possible reasons that may have led to the college's current accreditation problems, despite the glowing report it got from the accrediting commission that visited in early November last year

"I think, essentially, that it was the increased pressure from the federal government to ensure that academic institutions are in full compliance with the two-year rule," said NMC president Dr. Carmen Fernandez during a recent news briefing.

The two-year rule requires accreditors to provide no more than two years for an institution to correct deficiencies and come into full compliance with accreditation standards.

The two-year rule also requires accreditors to terminate accreditation if the two-year time limit is not met—unless the commission identifies "good cause" for extension.

It was learned that the "many, many years" of non-compliance was likely a big part of the reason that the CNMI's only institution for higher learning was recently placed on show-cause status.

A historical glance of NMC's progression through the years would show that the college had never really attended to its program assessment and learning programs since 1990 despite the reiteration of the Western Association of Schools & Colleges to address the issues in its program review.

The issues grew larger until 2006, when it became apparent that NMC was not forthcoming in its reports.

Fernandez, who assumed the college presidency in May 2007, had been praised by the accrediting team, stating, "She has used her boundless energy and direction from the Board of Regents to lead a college-wide effort for a successful reaffirmation of accreditation."

The accrediting team had also praised the new members of the Board of Regents stating that, "in every instance, the team noted a new spirit and hope for the college."

Another factor that NMC was downgraded after the good report was because the ACCJC needed NMC to address its issues more seriously.

"They want to ensure that by putting in this stronger sanction, that we do follow through and that in fact there is a response from the government and the Legislature to come to the aid of the college," said Fernandez.

The ACCJC stated that in order to satisfy the U.S. Department of Education's specific concerns with the accrediting commission's performance, the commission would have to make changes in its procedures as follows:

■ The commission will strengthen the language regarding the two-year rule that is included in action letters sent to institutions with deficiencies. The action letter will now set a specific date, within the two-year time limit, by which deficiencies must be addressed by the institution.

■ The commission will not extend beyond a maximum of two years the accreditation of an institution that is deficient in accreditation standards

■ The commission will create a small list of reasons that it will consider as a reasonable basis for extending the time permitted for "good cause" and communicate those to the USDE for consideration.

"But regardless of the fact we are in this position and because of the many, many years of non-compliance, we're here. We're dedicated and we're going to get the job done," Fernandez said.

10 ANAKS

From Page 2

members of AHA, Bellas added, the Nakamoto defendants have failed to transfer AHA's $210,000 to the custody of the new AHA board.

"The conduct of the Nakamoto defendants harmed the plaintiffs and other owners, and as a result of their breaches of fiduciary duty, plaintiffs have sustained economic damages and loss of opportunities in an amount of at least $2 million," he said.

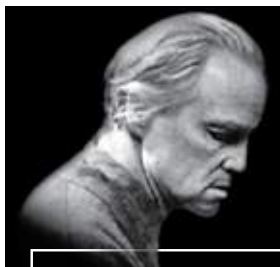
"I flew to Saipan to have my cataract surgery"

"When I wanted the best in eye care, I flew to Saipan to have my cataract surgery at Marianas Eye Institute with Dr. David Khorram, one of American's Top Ophthalmologists. I didn't want to waste time waiting for visiting specialists, or go to the expense, inconvenience and time loss of traveling to Hawaii or the Philippines when America's best is right next door on Saipan."
-Annette A. Donner
Guam Resident
Dr. David Khorram, MD
America's Top Ophthalmologists
Dr. Mark Robertson, OD
Magna Cum Laude
Marianas Eye Institute
"Where Technology Meets Talent"
235-9090
Beach Road, Garapan
www.MarianasEye.com
One-Hour Glasses • Contacts • Medical Eye Care
Advance Surgery & Laser • Botox
We accept: Aetna, Staywell, Moylan's, TakeCare, Medicaid, Calvos', Medicare, TriCare and more.

ADVANCE
X-TERMINATORS
A Professional Termite & General Pest Control Company
A Division of: Advance Group, LLC.
PMB 495 Box 10003, Saipan MP 96950 • Tel.: 670-233-4747 Tel./ Fax: 670-233-0210
Email: info@wereadvance.com • Website: www.WereADVANCE.com

Services Offered:
- Termite Elimination Program
- Pest & Rodent Control
- Soil Poisoning
- Pre & Post construction
- IPM (Integrated Pest Management)
- Free Estimate & Consultation
- Commercial / Residential
- 24/7 "On-Call" service

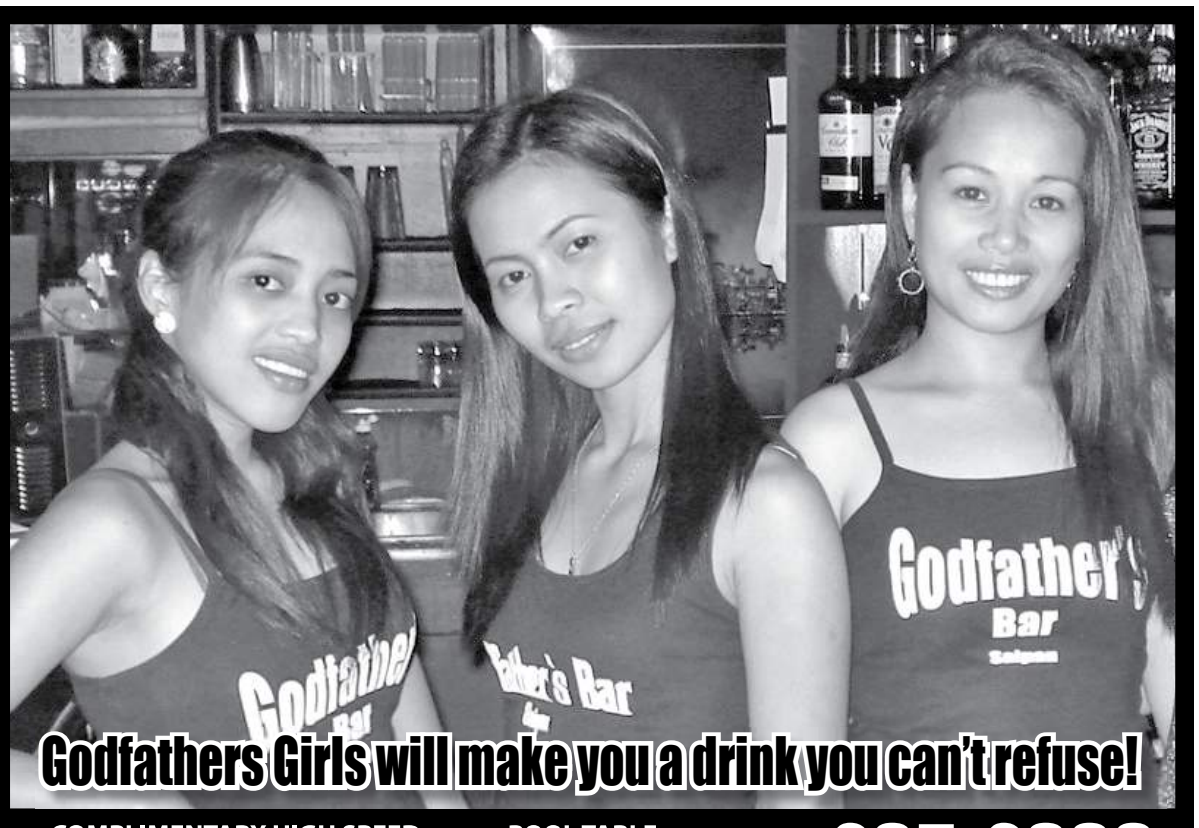
Authorized firm for:
EXTERRA
Termite Interception & Baiting System
Exterra is a Trademark of Ensystex, USA / Australasia.


Godfather's Bar
www.godfathersbar.com
Where everybody is family

Thank Godfathers Its Friday
Every Friday Ladies Night
Ladies First Drink Free after 8PM

ZNERGY BAND

LIVE EVERY THURSDAY 9:00PM
THURSDAY NIGHT
Miller Family Beers
$2.75 (bottles)



Godfathers Girls will make you a drink you can't refuse!

- COMPLIMENTARY HIGH SPEED WIRELESS INTERNET
- 8 TVs WITH SPORTS CHANNEL
- POOL TABLE
- BACK-UP GENERATOR POWER

235-2333

Garment factory shipment for Boston ends up stolen

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A garment factory's shipment of ladies' blouses worth $450,000 that was supposedly shipped out to a company in Boston ended up stolen and stored in a container yard in Puerto Rico, Saipan.

Police on Friday arrested Shu Jin, 37, female, a shipping staff of Kyung Seung Garment Factory Inc., for theft.

Jin was taken to the Superior Court yesterday for a bail hearing. Attorney Stephen C. Woodruff served as her counsel.

Associate Judge Ramona V. Manglona imposed a $10,000 cash bail for Jin's temporary liberty and set the bail modification hearing for today, Wednesday.

Detective Kevin Maratita stated in his report that on Friday night a police officer responded to a reported theft incident at the Cargo Express Container Yard in Puerto Rico.

Maratita said investigation showed that Gyeong Bong Lee, general manager of Kyung Seung Garment, received information that the company's missing merchandise were secured in two 20-foot containers at the Cargo Express Container Yard.

Police then learned that on Dec. 22, 2007 the garment factory shipped out two 20-foot containers to a company in Boston.

The containers were filled with $450,000 worth of ladies' blouses. On Jan. 28, 2008, Lee received a phone call from the company in Boston that several of the items in the containers were unaccounted for, particularly the brand clothing called Talbots.

Last Friday, Lee received a phone call from an individual who disclosed that the missing items were inside one of the containers at the Cargo Express Container Yard.

Lee's in-house investigation revealed that one of his staff, Jin, was allegedly responsible for the missing merchandise.

Detective Maratita said Jin was brought to the container yard where she admitted to having the items off-loaded from the containers prior to them being shipped off on Dec. 22, then re-loaded them in two containers at Cargo Express Container Yard.

The items were then transported back to the garment factory in Sadog Tasi.

The detective said Jin admitted that two men agreed to buy the items, but that the deal did not materialize.

Govendo corrects his order in Malite case

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Superior Court Associate Judge Kenneth Govendo has corrected the order that he issued in the Angel Malite estate probate in which he suspended lawyers Antonio M. Atalig and Reynaldo O. Yana from practicing law.

According to Govendo's errata order obtained by Saipan Tribune yesterday, the judge said that on Jan. 15, 2008 he issued an order finding Atalig and Yana in contempt of court. Govendo said he erroneously titled the order "amended order."

"The court recognizes the above-mention error and hereby corrects the title to read "order," said the judge in the document dated Jan. 15, 2008.

In a recent interview with *Saipan Tribun*e, Atalig accused Govendo of destroying an original order in the Malite probate.

Atalig explained that when he and Yana filed a petition for writ of prohibition in a criminal case, the CNMI Supreme Court directed Govendo to produce his original order in the Malite case.

Atalig said Govendo, however, "made the original order unreviewable."

He said the judge issued an amended order in the Malite case pertaining to his [Atalig] and Yana's suspension from practicing law.

"For an amended order to exist there has to be an original order. The fact that they destroyed the original order is a violation of the record keeping," Atalig pointed out.

He said the Supreme Court ordered Govendo to produce that original order because he and Yana need to see what is in that order.

Govendo found Atalig and Yana in contempt of court and suspended them from practicing law for failing to return to the court $1.3 million in attorney's fees that had been awarded them in the Malite probate.

Govendo also kicked out Jesus C. Tudela as the estate administrator for mismanagement.

Yana and Atalig appealed to the Supreme Court.

The high court stopped the suspension of Yana and Atalig and set an oral argument on March 11, 2008.

ERRATUM

In the article "A smoking hot festival on Tinian" published in the Feb. 19 edition of the *Saipan Tribune*, it quoted Borja as saying that she "has high hopes for Tinian, especially since the Hot Pepper Festival is starting to get noticed in the world map. Who knows we might become more popular than Mexico." What she meant was the Tinian hot pepper, which is the "Donni Sali." The sentence should have read, "Who knows, Tinian's hot pepper might be second to Mexico." Also, she said that the Santa Lourdes Fiesta (not Saipan but the fiesta on Tinian) and the Texas Hold 'Em at the TDHC contributed to the huge turnout.

LABOR

From Page 1

ing to hire him or her. That employer signifies his intent to hire the worker by signing the form, which the worker returns to Employment Services. Workers and their representatives may access the Labor website to find available jobs for which U.S. citizens and permanent residents have not applied for.

Employment Services checks to be sure that the job is posted on the website so that locals are notified of their availability.

After the normal referral period passes, Employment Services sends the request to transfer to all DOL units and to a designated hearing officer.

Any DOL unit may object to the transfer for reasons such as criminal convictions, pending labor cases, or suspected illegal sponsorship.

A hearing officer, after receiving objections at a hearing, will issue an order granting or denying permission to transfer. If permission is granted, the employer has 10 days to file the transfer application with Labor Processing. If permission is denied, the employee and employer have a right to appeal.

The new transfer process has been in effect since Monday, Feb. 4, 2008.

In her report to the Legislature, Kaipat also said that assistance is being provided to businesses. She said that upgraded technology allows for an automated processing of employment renewals and transfers.

She added that the department has eliminated the backlog in processing applications, and it expects that, with the new system, nearly all new applications will be processed within 30 days.

She informed lawmakers about the Labor's new website, which allows businesses to post job vacancy announcements at no cost.

Kaipat also reported that the department hopes to have pending labor cases from 2005, 2006, and 2007 to be completed by June 2008. A few cases are expected to be appealed to the secretary. A new process has been put in place to ensure appeals are decided within 30 days of being filed.

Labor Department personnel are conducting informational meetings on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota. Those interested in receiving a presentation may send an email to depsec2@gmail.com.

FITIAL

From Page 1

Jay Berman, a senior economist at the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of the Assistant Secretary for Policy, will also testify.

A separate hearing on the wage hikes will take place in American Samoa on Friday, Feb. 22, 2008. The field hearing will be conducted by the House Subcommittee on Insular Affairs.

The congressional hearings follow a report by the U.S. Department of Labor stating that further increases to the minimum wage may harm the economies of the Northern Marianas and American Samoa. Both U.S. possessions controlled their own wage rates until the federal wage law passed last year.

A bill was introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives to postpone the next 50-cent increase scheduled for May 2008. Sponsored by Faleomavaega, H.R. 5154 proposes to condition further increases in the minimum wage applicable to the two territories on a determination by the Department of Labor that such increases will not have an adverse impact on the economies of the places.

The minimum wage applicable to American Samoa and the CNMI were increased 50 cents an hour on July 24 and July 25, 2007, respectively. In addition, minimum wages to the territories will increase by 50 cents until they reach the federal minimum wage of $7.25 an hour.

For the CNMI, the minimum wage was increased by 50 cents an hour to $3.55 on July 25, 2007, and will rise to $7.25 an hour by 2015.

For American Samoa, current minimum wages vary by industry, with the most significant being the minimum wage for the tuna canning industry, which is currently $3.76 an hour, reflecting the initial 50-cent increase on July 24, 2007. The minimum wage for American Samoa will increase across the board to $7.25 an hour by 2014.

FIDEL

From Page 1

"I will not aspire to nor accept—I repeat, I will not aspire to nor accept—the post of President of the Council of State and Commander in Chief," read a letter signed by Castro published early Tuesday in the online edition of the Communist Party daily Granma.

The announcement effectively ends the rule of the 81-year-old Castro after almost 50 years, positioning his 76-year-old brother Raul for permanent succession to the presidency. Fidel Castro temporarily ceded his powers to his brother on July 31, 2006, when he announced that he had undergone intestinal surgery.

Since then, the elder Castro has not been seen in public, appearing only sporadically in official photographs and videotapes and publishing dense essays about mostly international themes as his younger brother has consolidated his rule.

A new National Assembly was elected in January, and will meet for the first time Sunday to pick the governing Council of State, including the presidency that Fidel Castro has held for decades. There had been wide speculation about whether he would continue in that role.

Castro rose to power on New Year's Day 1959 and reshaped Cuba into a communist state 90 miles (145 kilometers) from U.S. shores. The fiery guerrilla leader survived assassination attempts, a CIA-backed invasion and a missile crisis that brought the world to the brink of nuclear war. Ten U.S. administrations tried to topple him, most famously in the disastrous Bay of Pigs invasion of 1961.

His ironclad rule ensured Cuba remained communist long after the breakup of the Soviet Union and the collapse of communism across Eastern Europe.

Monarchs excepted, Castro was the world's longest ruling head of state.

Raul Castro had long been his brother's designated successor. The longtime defense minister had been in his brother's rebel movements since 1953 and spent decades as No. 2 in Cuba's power structure.

The United States, bent on ensuring neither brother is in power, built a detailed plan in 2005 for American assistance to ensure a democratic transition on the island of 11.2 million people after Fidel Castro's death. But Cuban officials insisted there would be no transition, saying the island's socialist political and economic systems would outlive Castro.

Castro's supporters admired his ability to provide a high level of health care and education for citizens while remaining fully independent of the United States.

HOTEL

From Page 1

The rise is buoyed partly by a similar increase in tourist arrivals in January 2008—a 6.7-percent increase to 68,088 from 63,784 registered in the same period a year ago.

HANMI board member and Hyatt Regency Saipan general manager Michael von Siebenthal said the positive numbers for last month was welcome news for the industry.

"This increase in room occupancy is a direct reflection of the growing Korean, China, and Russian markets. While these visitor numbers are very encouraging after a disappointing fourth quarter 2007, we still need to increase flights out of Japan to continue this upswing," he said.

HANMI chair Lynn A. Knight, for her part, is crossing her fingers the rise in hotel occupancy last month was just a sign of better things to come for the rest of 2008.

"The increased occupancy was certainly a boost compared to where we have been over the past year and we can see that we may hit the targets for this year in the five-year Strategic Plan for Tourism," she said. "We're starting to see some improvement because of the new Osaka flight, more flights out of Korea, and the seasonal air charters. This is traditionally our peak season so we should see good occupancy in February as well. Hopefully we will see an overall improvement for 2008 as a whole."

According to the hoteliers, these Russian and Korean visitors affected overall arrivals and occupancy in a favorable manner.

During the month of January 2008 CNMI hosted two Russian charter flights—Vladivostok Air and DalAvia. In addition, the CNMI continued to host a large quantity of honeymooners and small golf groups from Korea.

A total of 711 tourists from the former Soviet republic visited the CNMI in January 2008 compared to 498 in the same period last year. What's more, Russian guests stay an average of 12 days while in the CNMI, making them a viable market to continue to pursue and grow, according to the Marianas Visitors Authority.

Korea, meanwhile, continued its double-digit growth again last month, as 11,227 tourists from the Land of the Morning Calm visited the CNMI, compared to 9,953 during January 2007—a 13-percent increase.

The average room rate, $109.7 was also up $2.64, versus the January 2007 rate of $107.06. Additionally, the January 2008 room rate was up over the December 2007 rate of $103.67.

Although room occupancy and rates have started to improve, the HANMI board also noted that costs of doing business have continued to rise. With the added costs of power, fuel, shipping and food items, the industry is concerned about the impact of the impending minimum wage increase in May and its potential impact on jobs and working hours.

HANMI is currently finalizing the results of a study of the impact of minimum wage on hotels on Saipan, Tinian and Rota, which the organization expects to release in the coming week.

Established in 1985, the Hotel Association of the Northern Mariana Islands has over 33 hotel and allied members.

Alert vs high surf remains in place

The high surf and small craft advisory issued by the Emergency Management Office remains in place and the public is still being warned to keep out of the waters due to rip currents that could be life threatening.

EMO said that, based on the information received from the National Weather Service in Tiyan Guam, a north swell generated by strong winds east of Japan will bring hazardous surf to north facing reefs of the Mariana islands through Wednesday night.

The advisory will remain in effect until 6am Thursday.

High surf advisory means that hazardous surf and dangerous rip currents will affect exposed reefs and beaches in the advisory area. Expect hazardous surf of 8 to 10 feet today on north facing reefs. The surf is expected to fall to 7 to 9 feet tonight then subside to below hazardous levels by tomorrow.

Of particular concern are the Teteto Beach of Rota and Achugau and Wing beaches on Saipan.

EMO is strongly advising the public—especially fishermen, tour operators, divers and swimmers—to stay out of the water, or avoid venturing exposed beaches especially along north facing reefs, where rip currents will be life-threatening. ***(Saipan Tribune)***

Land exchange restriction revisited

A lawmaker has introduced a bill to reenact a law that restricted the public land exchange program within the respective islands.

Under Public Law 5-33, a private property taken by the government can only be exchanged for public land located within the same senatorial district. This law had been in effect on 10 years and expired on June 1, 1997.

Rep. David M. Apatang, author of the proposed legislation, says it is necessary to reapply the restriction indefinitely.

"The unique characteristic of real property and the substantial number of private land taking yet to be compensated either through land exchange or monetary compensation necessitate reviving such a restriction without a sunset clause," the bill states.

Approximately 300 landowners are still awaiting compensation from the CNMI government, which seized their properties for public purposes such as road construction, utility easements, wetlands, and historic preservation.

Last year, a law was enacted to restore the prioritization of land compensation claims. Under the law, the government must pay right-of-way claims first, ponding basin claims next, and wetland claims last.

Records from the Department of Public Lands show that some 170 landowners are currently waiting to be compensated for lands taken by the government for road projects. The list of pending right-of-way claims includes a total of 283 pieces of property. ***(Agnes E. Donato)***

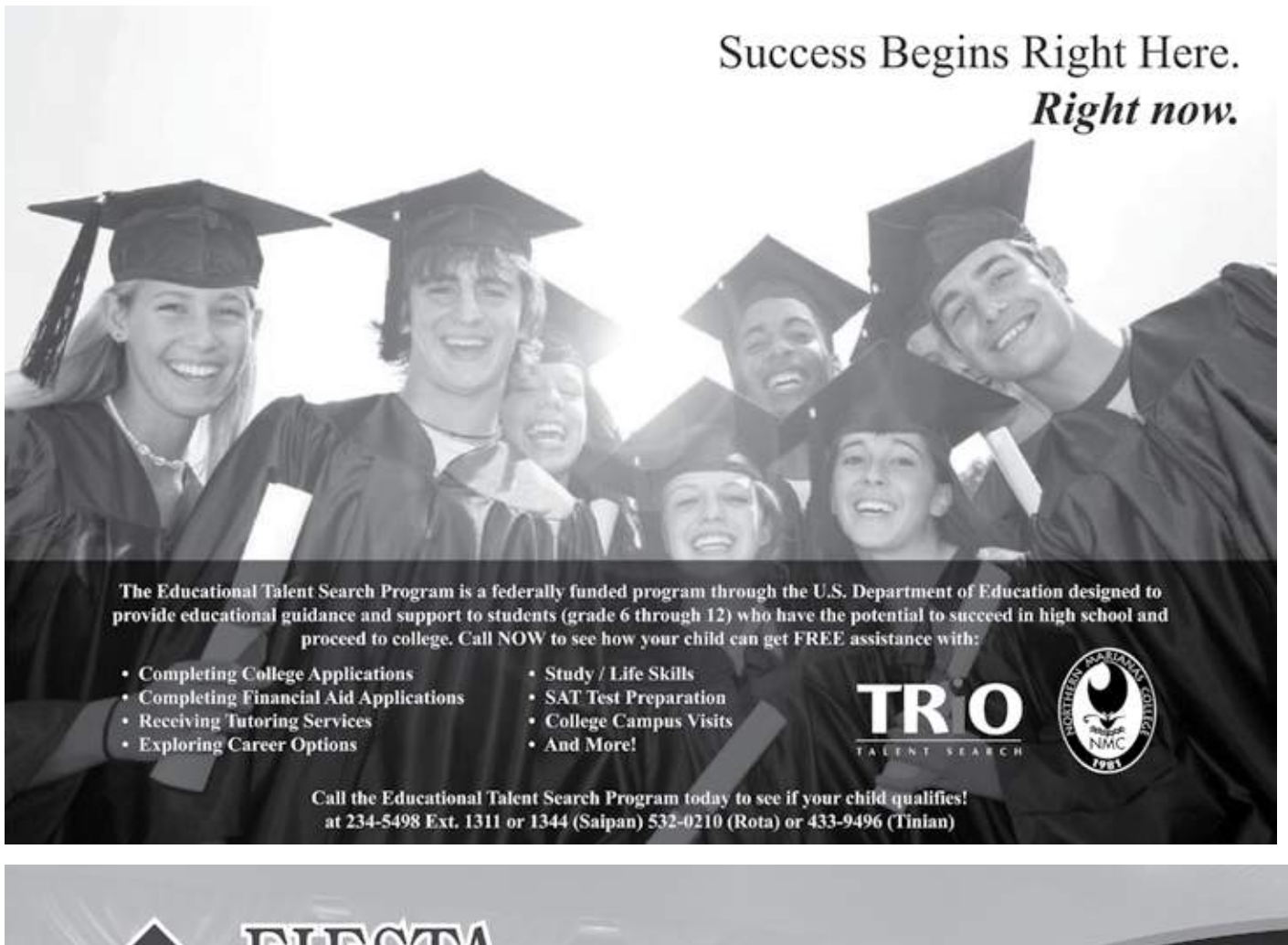
GTA TeleGuam donates 10K for Project Proa

TAMUNING, Guam—GTA TeleGuam has stepped up its commitment to the community by donating $10,000 in support of the Tourism Education Council's Project Proa.

"We are pleased to support such an important project for our community," said Dan Moffat, president and CEO of GTA TeleGuam. "The Proa is the symbol of GTA TeleGuam because it represents speed, technological excellence and our roots in Guam. Building the Proa canoe is significant to Guam's unique history and culture and we are honored to be a part of this project."

Jose Munoz, chairman of Project Proa for TEC, said, "We are excited about having GTA TeleGuam as one of our key partners in this project. We hope to build this canoe throughout 2008 and launch it at the end of the year. We want to teach the community, our youth and our visitors about the importance of the Proa canoe to our region by reviving the dying art of building one."

For more information about Project Proa, email projectproa@gmail.com or log on to www.projectproa.com. ***(PR)***


Success Begins Right Here.
Right now.
The Educational Talent Search Program is a federally funded program through the U.S. Department of Education designed to provide educational guidance and support to students (grade 6 through 12) who have the potential to succeed in high school and proceed to college. Call NOW to see how your child can get FREE assistance with:
• Completing College Applications
• Completing Financial Aid Applications
• Receiving Tutoring Services
• Exploring Career Options
• Study / Life Skills
• SAT Test Preparation
• College Campus Visits
• And More!
TRIO
TALENT SEARCH
NMC
Call the Educational Talent Search Program today to see if your child qualifies!
at 234-5498 Ext. 1311 or 1344 (Saipan) 532-0210 (Rota) or 433-9496 (Tinian)

HARDT EYE CLINIC

Experience our personal touch to Eye Care

DAVID HARDT, O.D. | DON HARDT, O.D.

SERVICES OFFERED:

• New patients welcome • Thorough examinations for eye disease
• Treatment for infections and injuries • Glaucoma treatment • Diabetic eye care
• Infant/children eye exams • We love kids
• Staff aare fluent in Chamorro, Carolinian, Japanese, Tagalog and Chinese.

We are open for your convenience 6 days a week.

Monday to Friday from 8:00am to 5:00pm except Wednesdays from 10:00am to 7:00pm and Saturdays from 9:00am to 1:00pm.

We accept most insurance plans including Aetna, Medicaid, Medicare, Staywell, Calvo's, Netcare, Takecare. Tricare Overseas, and Blue Cross (Federal Govt. employees)

We accept most credit cards including Visa, MasterCard and American Express

Please call us now at 235-2030

We are located at beach road next to Megabyte.

Group opposes tapping MPLT funds for CUC

Representatives of local advocacy group Taotao Tano met with Rep. Heinz Hofschneider Wednesday last week to discuss his proposed House Legislative Initiative 16-5 to borrow $30 million from the Marianas Public Land Trust to rescue the Commonwealth Utilities Corp.

Taotao Tano president Gregorio Cruz Jr. said the group disagrees with Hofschneider's solution to the island's power crises.

"Thirty million dollars from a trust account reserved and protected for the indigenous Northern Marianas decent people of the Commonwealth should not be his [Hofschneider's] solution. It is a shame for congressman Hofschneider to be leaning toward the suffering people to help CUC, especially when the people continue to suffer from failures of both the public utility and the past lawmakers to rectify CUC's problems."

Hofschneider, a speaker of the House in the 13th Legislature, reportedly stated "that there is no other solution."

Cruz described Hofschneider's proposal as "unjust" and said that Taotao Tano remains opposed to the legislation because CUC already received help during the previous administration from MPLT for a $10 million guaranty to secure a contract from Mobil Oil Marianas for fuel supply. Also, the group said that the collateral used by CUC to secure a line of credit from MPLT was from CUC's customer deposit account funds.

"Again, CUC acted unfaithfully and illegally using customer deposits as collateral for a $10 million line of credit without the consent or notification of the customers, the taxpayers, the public," Cruz said.

Taotao Tano stated that, one, the CUC customer deposit account funds were identified in a security agreement and in MPLT's possession and was managed separately for CUC's benefit, and two, MPLT charged a non-refundable annual guaranty fee of 0.5 percent based upon the amount of the actual guaranty used. Mobil had required CUC to secure a $ 10-million guaranty or line of credit as part of the contract.

"Taotao Tano is investigating whether the loan was satisfied by CUC and the customer deposits returned to customers to include the 0.5 percent interest MPLT charged CUC, earned as guaranty fee," Cruz said.

Taotao Tano also said that the Legislative Branch "should stop treating MPLT as if it's there own personal Bank and the only solution. The 16th Legislature should find fresh resources since CUC was at the top of their platform prior to being elected into office."

Cruz also brought up a bill proposed by Rep. Francisco Dela Cruz in the 15th Legislature to write off a $ 45 million CUC debt from the Commonwealth Development Authority. ***(PR)***

Church is burglarized, safe with money stolen

The San Jose Church was burglarized and a safe deposit box containing an undisclosed amount of money was stolen, police said yesterday.

Department of Public Safety spokesperson Lei Ogumoro said that DPS received a call of a burglary and theft incident at the church on Monday at 4:56am.

Preliminary investigation showed that police discovered evidence that the door on the northern side of the church was forced open and the safe was stolen.

A crime scene technician was summoned to the scene.

"This case is under investigation," Ogumoro said.

The NMI Crime Stoppers Program is offering up to $1,000 cash to anyone who can provide information leading to an arrest.

On Feb. 20, 2006, three men conspired to burglarize San Jose Church. Fifteen bottles of wine used in church services for communion were stolen, along with computer speakers.

Police investigation led to the arrest and conviction of Albert Patrick Kaipat, Joaquin I. Pangelinan and Marvin J. L. Somol.

Many years ago a group of juveniles vandalized the same church and threw a Bible and other church items into the toilet bowl. The suspects were arrested and subsequently convicted.

MARIANAS PUBLIC LAND TRUST BOARD OF TRUSTEES

NOTICE OF REGULAR MEETING

Pursuant to Public Law 8-41, Section 11, The Open Government Act of 1992, the Marianas Public Land Trust have scheduled a Board of Trustees Regular Meeting for **Thursday, February 21, 2008 beginning at 6:00 PM at the Plumeria Room, Saipan World Resort; Saipan, MP**.

Original Date: February 15, 2008
Original Location: Plumeria Room, Saipan World Resort

The following agenda is hereby established:

I PRELIMINARIES
- Call to Order
- Roll Call
- Adoption of Agenda
- Adoption of Minutes

II CONSULTANT REPORTS
- Legal Counsel Reports*
- Loan Administrator Reports
  - Transition Matters
- Investment Consultant Reports
  - Flash Reports – January 2007
- Board Consultant Reports
  - Financial Statements – January 2007

III CHAIRMAN'S REPORT
- Administrative Matters

IV OLD BUSINESS

V NEW BUSINESS

VI EXECUTIVE SESSION

At anytime during this scheduled meeting, the Board of Trustees may be required to enter into Executive Session to discuss matters deemed privileged and confidential.

VII MISCELLANEOUS

VIII ADJOURNMENT

* It is anticipated that the following matters will be discussed under Executive Session in its entirety.

In accordance with Public Law 8-41, additional agenda items may be added to the above listing only by the recorded vote of the majority of the trustee governing body.

All interested persons are welcome to attend and to submit written and oral testimony on the above agenda items.

/s/ Alvaro A. Santos
Chairman, Board of Trustees

Northern Marianas College
Procurement & Property Management Office

INVITATION FOR BID
*****AMENDED*****

IFB 08-001 - Paupau Beach Marine-Environmental and Marine-Culture Center Demonstration Center Construction Project

Northern Marianas College is soliciting competitive sealed bids for construction of the Paupau Beach Environmental Marine and Mari-Culture Demonstration Center, in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands.

Specifications and Scope of Work packages may now be picked up at the NMC Procurement Office, Bldg. L, 2nd Floor, Monday to Friday between the hours of 8: 30-11:30 a.m. and 1:00-4:30 p.m. There may be a fee when picking up a package. Please call 234-5498 ext. 2300/01/02 for information regarding fees. Construction drawings and diagrams have to be purchased.

There will be a Project Briefing Conference, March 4th, 2008, 9:00 a.m. at the NMC As Terlaje Campus, CREES conference room (Bldg. F). Please contact Mr. Glenn Keaton (ext. 1200) or Mr. Lee Bowen (ext. 1728) at 234-5498 for more information.

Bid Packages are due March 21st, 2008 at 10:00 a.m. Saipan time at the Northern Marianas College, As Terlaje Campus, Procurement Office, Bldg. L, 2nd Floor, Saipan, MP 96950. All bidders must pay a Bid Security Deposit of 15% of their total bid when submitting bid packages.

Bidding procedures shall be in compliance with NMC and CNMI Procurement Regulations, however, Article 7, "Local Business Preference", as amended by Public Laws 15-95 and as further amended by Public Law 15-118, is not available to local bidders in this procurement because; it is prohibited by the federal law granting the funding for this project. For bidders located outside of the CNMI: You may request a copy of the Invitation for Bid via fax (670) 235-7601 or e-mail to Duane R.T. Sablan (duanes@nmcnet.edu). There may be a processing fee.

Bidders are advised that this project is subject to compliance with the Davis-Bacon Act and the labor standard provisions for wage rate determination of the Commonwealth. All labor on the project shall be paid no less than the minimum wage rate of $3.55 per hour which took effect on July 25, 2007 as established by Federal law including subsequent increases of $.50 per hour every six (6) months (or next effective dates) until the hourly rate equals that of the Federal Minimum Wage of $7.50 per hour.

This project is funded by a grant from the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), under its Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) provided to the Commonwealth. This project is also subject to Section 3 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1968 that requires recipients of HUD funds and the contractors to help insure that the economic opportunities generated by these HUD funds are provided to local low-income residents and the businesses that serve them "to the maximum extent feasible."

All bidders are hereby notified that the Northern Marianas College and CNMI Government will affirmatively insure that in any contract entered into pursuant to this advertisement, women and small business enterprises will be afforded full opportunity to submit proposals and will not be discriminated against on grounds of race, color, national origin, political affiliation, creed, sex, religion, age, familial status, and disability status.

This solicitation does not constitute an offer and does not obligate the College in any way. The NMC reserves the right to reject any and/or all proposals for any reason and waive any defect in said proposals, or cancel in part or its entirety this RFP, if it deems, in its sole discretion, it is in the best interest of the College. All costs incurred by the bidder to prepare a response this solicitation and subsequent inquiries shall be borne by the bidder. All submittals shall become the property of NMC and will not be returned.

Approved by the following:

/s/ Duane R.T. Sablan	Manuel A. Sablan	Glenn Keaton
NMC Procurement & Property	Chairman & Contracting Officer	Chair, NMC Sciences, Maths
Property Management Office	Northern Marianas Housing Corporation	Health & Athletics Department

Decena graduates from basic training

Decena

Air Force Airman Janika A. Decena has graduated from basic military training at Lackland Air Force Base, San Antonio, Texas.

During the six-week training, the airman studied the Air Force mission, organization, and military customs and courtesies; performed drill and ceremony marches, and received physical training, rifle marksmanship, field training exercises, and special training in human relations.

In addition, airmen who complete basic training earn credits toward an associate degree through the Community College of the Air Force.

Decena is the daughter of Sonny Decena and Linda Decena, both from Tinian.

Decena is a 2007 graduate of Tinian Jr. and Sr. High School.

The Decena family would like to extend their sincere appreciation to their friends Kim and Maria for their generosity during their stay in Texas. ***(Rianne Pangelinan-Brown)***

MARIANA EXPRESS LINES PTE. LTD.

Weekly Hong Kong, Kaohsiung, Saipan, Guam, Yap, Koror, Gensan, Davao, Cebu (MXS Service)

VESSEL	VOY	HONGKONG	KAOHSHIUNG	GUAM	SAIPAN	YAP	KOROR	GENSAN	DAVAO	CEBU
STADT HAMBURG	V012	2/15 FRI	2/16 SAT	2/22 FRI	2/23 SAT	2/26 TUE	2/27 WED	2/29 FRI	3/1 SAT	3/4 TUE
SYLVETTE***	V016	2/22 FRI	2/23 SAT	2/29 FRI	3/1 SAT	SKIP	3/5 WED	3/7 FRI	3/8 SAT	3/11 TUE
ASIAN ISLAND	V005	2/29 FRI	3/1 SAT	3/7 FRI	3/8 SAT	3/11 TUE	3/12 WED	3/14 FRI	3/15 SAT	3/18 TUE
STADT HAMBURG	V013	3/7 FRI	3/8 SAT	3/14 FRI	3/15 SAT	SKIP	3/19 WED	3/21 FRI	3/22 SAT	3/25 TUE
MELL SENOKO	V017	3/14 FRI	3/15 SAT	3/21 FRI	3/22 SAT	3/25 TUE	3/26 WED	3/28 FRI	3/29 SAT	4/1 TUE
ASIAN ISLAND	V006	3/21 FRI	3/22 SAT	3/28 FRI	3/29 SAT	SKIP	4/2 WED	4/4 FRI	4/5 SAT	4/8 TUE
STADT HAMBURG	V014	3/28 FRI	3/29 SAT	4/4 FRI	4/5 SAT	4/8 TUE	4/9 WED	4/11 FRI	4/12 SAT	4/15 TUE
MELL SENOKO	V018	4/4 FRI	4/5 SAT	4/11 FRI	4/12 SAT	SKIP	4/16 WED	4/18 FRI	4/19 SAT	4/22 TUE
ASIAN ISLAND	V007	4/11 FRI	4/12 SAT	4/18 FRI	4/19 SAT	4/22 TUE	4/23 WED	4/25 FRI	4/26 SAT	4/29 TUE

NOTE: ***SYLVETTE V16 SCHEDULED FOR DOCKING ON 23RD FEB 2008 TO 2ND/3RD MARCH (SKIP GUAM, SAIPAN AND KOROR) AND PROCEED TO GENSAN ETA 7TH MARCH 2008.

Weekly service. More frequent. More dependable.

Website: www.mariana-express.com

Exclusive General Agent of MELL

For bookings, you may call our Saipan agent:

CTSI LOGISTICS,
CTSI Building, Lower Base,
P.O. Box 501937,
Saipan MP 96950
Website: www.ctsi-logistics.com

Edgar T. Garcia
Inbound
Direct line (670) 236-2422

Jaime P. Salazar
Outbound
Direct line (670) 236-2410

Robert Reyes
Sales and Marketing
Direct line (670) 236-2403

CTSI Logistics
Moving the world

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
In the photo, left to right, are Martin Duenas of MVA, Denice Shoemake, secretary; Coreen Palacios, vice chairman; Ed Cho, MTEC chairman; Nhing Reyes, treasurer; and Vicky Benavente, board member.

MTEC elects new board of directors

The Marianas Tourism Education Council has elected Ed Cho, general manager of Saipan Grand Hotel, to serve as chairman of MTEC for 2008 – 2009. Also elected to serve on the board of directors were Coreen Palacios (PSS), Denice Shoemake, and Nhing Reyes (Ernst & Young) as vice chairman, secretary, and treasurer, respectively.

Outgoing MTEC chair Vicky Benavente thanked the board members for their hard work and commitment this past year.

"We will continue to emphasize the importance of our tourism industry, especially with the youth of the CNMI," said Benavente. "Our young adults and youth hold a crucial role in the path that our islands take as we continue to develop our valuable tourism industry."

Formed in 2002, MTEC's mission is to foster and improve community understanding and support for the visitor industry; educate the general public, especially students, about the value, social benefits and economic contributions made to the community by the tourism industry; and to instill, improve and promote the "hafa adai" hospitality spirit throughout the Northern Mariana Islands.

In addition, MTEC was created to heighten the community's awareness about the great affect tourism has on well being of the CNMI people. MTEC was shaped with the belief that for the CNMI to stay competitive in the regional tourism market, it is crucial everyone promote the islands locally and abroad.

Charter sponsors of MTEC are the Marianas Visitors Authority, DFS Galleria and the Pacific Islands Club. ***(MTEC)***

APPOINTMENT TO PANEL OF CHAPTER 7 TRUSTEES

The Office of the United States Trustee is seeking resumes from persons wishing to be considered for appointment to the panel of trustees who administer cases filed under chapter 7 of the bankruptcy code. The appointment is for cases filed in the United States Bankruptcy Court for the Districts of Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. Chapter 7 trustees receive compensation and reimbursement for expenses in each case in which they serve, pursuant to court order under 11 U.S.C. Sec. 330 and Sec. 326. Please note this is not a salaried position.

The minimum qualifications for appointment are set forth in Title 28 of the Code of Federal Regulations at Part 58. To be eligible for appointment, an applicant must possess strong administrative, financial and interpersonal skills. Fiduciary experience or familiarity with the bankruptcy area is desirable but not mandatory. A successful applicant will be required to undergo a background check, and must qualify to be bonded. Although chapter 7 trustees are not federal employees, appointments are made consistent with federal Equal Opportunity policies, which prohibit discrimination in employment.

Forward resumes to Carol K. Muranaka, Assistant United States Trustee , Office of the United States Trustee, Vacancy Code: ST, 1132 Bishop Street, Suite 602, Honolulu, HI, 96813. All resumes should be postmarked on or before March 14, 2008.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

DOG FOUND

This adult male black Labrador was found on Sunday, Feb. 17, 2008 in the area of Outer Cove Marina. He was wearing a blue collar at the time he was found. If this is your dog or if you know his owner, contact Jean at 322-9099 or 483-9121.

NEED A JOB & MONEY DAILY???
BE A DANCER!
PLEASE BE ADVISED THAT BENEFIT INCLUDES 50% COMMISSION DAILY AND TIPS ARE ALL YOURS!
21 years old to 28 years old.
235-5009 • 287-6916

Europe Marian Pilgrimage
In Conjunction with
150th Anniversary of the Lourdes Appraitions
March 25 -16th Apparitions "I am the Immaculate Conception"
Rome, Assisi, Florence, Monte Carlo, Nice, Lourdes, Zaragoza, Madrid, Avila, Fatima, Lisbon
March 18 - April 2, 2008
$2,990 twin sharing per person
Includes
Economy class Manila-Rome and Lisbon-Manila
Breakfast and Dinner throughout
All hotel accommodation at 3-4 star hotels
All tours mensioned with English speaking guides
Transfer from Airport to hotel and vice versa
Some restrictions apply.
For more information please call your travel agents, Lisa and Jie at (670) 235-3708 to 10 or e-mail us at customerservice@centurytravelagency.com
www.centurytravelagency.com
Century Travel AGENCY, INC.
A TanHoldings Company
Going the Extra Mile to Serve You!
Ground Floor CIC Centre, Beach Road, Garapan, PMB 193 Box 10000 PPP, Saipan MP 96950

Carlos Salas now PAG interim GM

Former Commonwealth Ports Authority executive director Carlos Salas is now the head of the Port Authority of Guam.

This after PAG general manager Ken Tagawa resigned due to health issues, according to a report from KUAM.com.

Salas, who studied high school in Guam and was reportedly a schoolmate of now Guam Gov. Felix Camacho, had worked for CPA for 15 years, including eight years where he served as the agency' top executive.

He retired from CPA in December 2005 but remained its consultant in 2006 up to last month, mainly handling federal projects.

Salas

Over a couple of years ago, Salas applied for the executive manager post at GIAA and emerged as one of the finalists for the job. The agency eventually chose former Guam senator Jesse Torres as GIAA executive.

At CPA, Salas had served as treasurer-comptroller and administrative assistant to the executive director before being appointed executive director on Jan. 8, 1998.

Salas is regarded as an expert on issues relating to the Federal Aviation Administration.

During his term as executive director, the CPA reportedly obtained funding of up to $16 million annually from FAA to improve airport infrastructure and services.

As CPA consultant, Salas was tasked to assist the CPA in tracking the status of federally funded projects and in carrying out other projects that will increase the authority's revenues through non-aviation sources, such as land development, seaport expansion, and the construction of a drydock facility. ***(Mark Rabago)***

Over 140 students participate in Mathcounts

By RIANNE PANGELINAN-BROWN
rianne_pangelinan@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Marianas Baptist Academy's Team A topped the team competition against 15 different schools. From left, MBA principal coach Ramir Trinidad, Dong Hee Im, Sung Hoon Ham, Manatsu Omori, and Mark Anthony Liban.

Over 140 students from 15 public and private schools competed in the first round of the 14th annual Mathcounts Competition last Saturday at the Multi-Purpose Center in Susupe.

Students in the sixth, seventh, and eighth grade from the three islands participated in this year's chapter competition, organized by EFC Engineers and Architects.

The schools were allowed to enter three teams comprising four students per team.

Marianas Baptist Academy's Team A, coached by school principal Ramir Trinidad, topped the team competition. The team was composed of Sung Hoon Ham, Dong Hee Im, Manatsu Omori, and Mark Anthony Liban.

Two teams from MBA placed in the top four teams, along with Calvary Christian Academy Team A and Saipan Community School Team A.

One of the highlights of Saturday's competition was Omori, who placed seventh during the individual round. He came in hard and strong at the countdown round, beating out other top 10 competitors to earn for himself a fourth place seat in the round.

The top ten individuals were Han Byol Yu, CCA; Sung Hoon Ham, MBA; Dong Hee Im, MBA; Ji Hoon Choi, CCA; Sung Eun An, MBA; Ji Yong Park, SCS; Manatsu Omori, MBA; Harry Jun, SIS; So Hyo Lee, MBA; and Joon Lee, Eucon International School.

The top four students in the countdown round included Sung Hoon Ham, MBA; Han Byol Yu, CCA; Manatsu Omori, MBA; and Dong Hee Im, MBA.

Mathcounts state coordinator Martha Camacho said the students will return on March 15 for the State competition in which the schools will only enter their two best teams.

The March 15 competition will determine the top four students, along with the winning coach, who will represent the CNMI in the Mathcounts National Competition in Colorado.

Sponsors of the Mathcounts competition were EFC Engineers & Architects; Duty Free Shoppers Galleria; Chong's Corp.; Bridge Capital LLC; Pacific Telecommunications Inc.; Subway Investments, Coca-Cola Beverage Co.; Foremost; Joeten Charitable Foundation; Transamerica Corp.; Deloitte & Touche; Winzler & Kelly; UMD; and the National Office Supply.

Mathcounts also acknowledged the Marianas High School National Honor Society, who helped tabulate the results.

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

GTC PTA meeting today

The Gregorio T. Camacho Elementary School is informing parents and guardians that there will be a Parents Teachers Association meeting today, Feb. 20, 2008, at 6pm in the school cafeteria. Everyone is encouraged to attend this meeting. ***(PR)***

KHS PTA meeting today

Parents and guardians of students of Kagman High School are being informed that there will be a Parents Teachers Association meeting today, Feb. 20, 2008, at 6pm in the school cafeteria. For those living in Marpi, As Matuis, San Roque, Sadog Tasi, and Tanapag, please attend the meeting at Tanapag Elementary School library via video teleconference.

For more information, call 237-3840 or 237-3832. ***(PR)***

MHS Class of '83 meeting

The MHS Class of 1983's 25th year reunion is fast approaching and event tickets are selling like hotcakes. Please come and join us at our next meeting on Friday, Feb. 29, 2008, at 6pm, at the Kilili Beach pavilion. See your committee memners for great deals on event tickets.

Contact any of the Steering Committee members for details: Tonnei Camacho, 483-9665; Viola Kaipat, 483-0214; Ed Camacho, 483-5262; Jane Tudela, 234-9571; Frances Mildred Cruz, 483-0995; Ester Teregeyo, 285-6284; Ben Sablan, 287-1480; or Diego Songsong, 287-4300. ***(PR)***

MMAC Committee meeting tomorrow

There will be a Marianas March Against Cancer Committee meeting tomorrow, Feb. 20, 2008, 12pm, at Pierre's Restaurant, in Garapan.

The Marianas March Against Cancer Committee is inviting all committee members to attend this monthly meeting where important information regarding the upcoming 2008 MMAC will be discussed. If anyone in the community is interested in joining this unique committee we encourage you to attend this meeting. For more information, e-mail Chris A. Concepcion at chrisaconcepcion@gmail.com. ***(MMAC)***

MHS Class of '88 meeting tomorrow

This is to inform the Class of 1988 of Marianas High School that there will be a meeting tomorrow, Feb. 21, 2008 at 7pm at the Kagman Community Center. This is to update plans on the upcoming 20th class reunion. All classmates are encouraged to attend this important meeting. For more information, contact Lillian Lizama Tudela at 287-3742 or Dennis Villagomez at 287-4689. ***(PR)***

LibDay booth concessions

The 2008 Liberation Day Committee is now accepting applications for the 2008 Liberation Day Carnival Grounds Booth Concessions. Interested individuals and/or firms may pick up an application at the Office of the Mayor of Saipan in the Afetnas Square in San Antonio.

As the number of booths will be limited, booths will be issued on a first-come, first-serve basis.

For more information, contact Concessions Committee chair Piding Tenorio at 287-8091. Deadline for submission of concession application is April 30, 2008 at the Saipan Mayor's Office. ***(PR)***

2007 1120-CM Forms released Friday

The Division of Revenue and Taxation wishes to inform all CNMI businesses that the distribution of the 2007 1120-CM Forms and Instructions began Friday, Feb. 15, 2008 from 8am to 4pm at the Office of the Division of Revenue and Taxation, located at the Joeten DanDan Commercial Center. The 1120-CM Form and Supplemental Instruction are also available online at www.dof.gov.mp.

All businesses are asked to pick up the forms during the regular business hours. The deadline for filing 2007 1120-CM Form is Monday, March 17, 2008 at 4:30pm. ***(DoF)***

Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

FEBRUARY 20, 2001

Due to social promotion, NMI gets ill-trained workers?
Like US mainland schools, Northern Marianas' educational system produces its share of students who advance in the academic ladder through a nationally-recognized problem called social promotion. Board of Education Chair Anthony Pellegrino acknowledged the issue as a pressing dilemma in CNMI public schools, where students with slow learning skills are permitted to march to the next grade level to make way for a fresh slate of incoming students.

NMIRF may pull out major investment in Asia
The NMI Retirement Fund might be compelled to pull out its major investments in Asia due to the continued economic crisis which has been invariably affecting the status of its investment portfolio. Fund officials already set the remaining three quarters of FY2001 to allow major Asian investments to rebound as recommended by portfolio managers although there are possible changes in terms of stocks and investments abroad by next year, NMIRF Board Chair Vicente Camacho disclosed Friday.

Modest growth in hotel occupancy taxes noted
The amount of revenues generated by the CNMI government from hotel occupancy taxes inched up a modest four percent in the first nine months of the Fiscal Year 2000, but analysts said this does not mean the sector is in for a fruitful year. Records from the Department of Finance disclosed collections from hotel occupancy taxes climbed to $4.7 million in the first three quarters of the last financial year, up by only $200,000 from FY1999.

FEBRUARY 20, 2002

Saipan's water supply in danger
The proposed Aircraft Rescue and Firefighting Training Facility at the Saipan International Airport poses risk of contaminating Saipan's best drinking water drawn from the Isley Well Field, the source of 60-percent of the island's water supply. The facility, if erected at the proposed site, increases the risk of fuel release, and the contamination of the water source by firefighting foam and other wastes, according to the Division of Environmental Quality.

CNMI govt. assets reach $1B
The good news is that, by September 30, 2000, the CNMI government had total assets of about $1 billion, total liabilities of about $324 million, and total fund equity of $696 million. The bad news is that, covering the same period, the General Fund had an accumulated deficit of $69.5 million and a net fund deficit of $33 million.

OPA, AGO tie up to unclog pending recommendations
In a bid to beat any statute of limitations, the Attorney Ge-neral's Office is now coordinating with the Office of the Public Auditor to follow through on prior recommendations made by the OPA that have remained backlogged or have not been acted upon. Attorney General Robert T. Torres said he and his attorneys have already met with Public Auditor Michael S. Sablan and his investigators to go over previous OPA recommendations, particularly those that pushed for the filing of civil and criminal lawsuits.

FEBRUARY 20, 2003

Dumpsite padlocked
CNMI officials led by Gov. Juan N. Babauta and Lt. Gov. Diego T. Benavente yesterday chained shut the gates of the Puerto Rico dump, with student representatives given the opportunity to padlock the gates. "I'm so glad that they finally closed it [dump]. It's such an ugly view, especially for tourists," said Aileen Alcala, a 9th grader at the Mt. Carmel School. Together with fellow student Christopher Ching, Alcala padlocked the gates of Puerto Rico in a final gesture that puts behind decades of efforts to rid the CNMI of this eyesore.

Business-friendly process in the making
After adopting an affirmative position on the measure promoting the $25,000-bond in lieu of the $100,000-security deposit for long-term investors, the House is poised to take on other business initiatives intended to lure in more foreign investments. Speaker Heinz S. Hofschneider raised the need to streamline the process of setting up a business in the Commonwealth by doing away with what he termed as the "territorial or turf mentality" among regulating agencies.

Pacific

Tonga electricity rates skyrocket 23 percent

NUKUALOFA, Tonga (Matangi Tonga)—As Tonga's electricity price goes up by 20.7 percent to 23 percent tonight households and small businesses will wake up in the morning to face the fact they will be paying hundreds of pa'anga more for their electricity supply this year, while for larger businesses the new rate will increase their costs by thousands of pa'anga per year.

The price of electricity will rise by up to 15 seniti per unit in Tongatapu, Vava'u, Ha'apai and 'Eua as from mid-night tonight, General Manager of Shoreline Power, David Dunkley announced in a statement released at 3:30 pm today.

He stated that Vava'u electricity consumers will pay the most for their electricity, at 85.15 seniti per kilowatt hour (20.7 percent increase), followed by Tongatapu consumers at 83.15 per unit (21.4 percent increase), and Ha'apai and 'Eua consumers at 78.15 per unit (23 percent increase).

For Tongatapu consumers this is an increase of 14.64 seniti per unit.

This means that a typical small business consumer who uses 500 units a month will pay $878 more this year for their power supply, with their total annual consumption now costing $4,989.

A household that uses 200 units a month will pay $352 more this year for their power supply with their total annual consumption now costing $1,732, after a subsidy.

In Vava'u it will cost even more.

Shoreline also reminded consumers that, "the government subsidy of 11 seniti per kilowatt hour, for the first 200 units of power used each month for domestic users in Tongatapu and Vava'u is still in place and is considered by the government on a month to month basis."

A release from the Tonga Electric Power Board earlier in the morning stated that there had been an application by Shoreline Power for an increase in the price of electricity to offset an increase in the price of diesel by 40 percent, from 125 seniti per litre in June 2007 to 175 seniti per litre in January 2008.

Castalia Ltd., the Economic and Strategic Advisors for TEPB, advised that a 21 percent increase in tariff was justifiable to cover the increase in fuel costs.

Vanuatu official urges assessment of cyclone damage

PORT VILA, Vanuatu (Vanuatu Daily Post)—The National Disaster Management Unit has been urged to personally go to Torba to carry out an assessment following the damage left by cyclone Funa.

The concern was raised by a government civil servant from the Penama Province who is serving in the Banks.

He raised concern that with Torba being the forgotten Province, there is high possibility that the government could turn a blind eye on these people again.

The government officer who did not want his name to be revealed was there during the cyclone and shared experience of how the cyclone hit the people.

He said he is very sure that in a few more months the people of this province would have nothing to eat due to the damage caused.

Daily post was told that schools on the island would begin in March but their worry is whether there wouldn't be any food for the boarding students.

There is also concern raised about the roof of the dining hall at the Arep Junior secondary school that was blown away by storm force winds from the cyclone.

Daily post understands that a committee had been set up in the Torba Provincial Headquarter but the concerned teacher is strongly appealing to members to the NDMO to attend the site themselves in order that they carry out a thorough assessment report.

Solomons auditor probes misuse of fisheries funds

HONIARA, Solomon Islands (Solomon Star)—Large amounts of public money appear to have been misused in fisheries projects last year, Auditor-General Augustine Fatai said yesterday

Fatai confirmed his office is investigating what happened to millions of dollars paid out.

So far his office's findings showed there is a lot of misappropriation and lack of accountability and transparency, Fatai said.

Members of Parliament are amongst those who got money, he said.

Fatai was commenting following reports in the Solomon Star questioning where millions of dollars given out under the Sogavare Government ended up.

The Star has highlighted how people got pro-forma invoices from businesses to get things like fiberglass boats under the project for fishing. But the business people became suspicious when the people did not come back to buy the boats.

Fatai said it is not only the fisheries projects that are in question.

There are also questions over project payments in the Agriculture, Commerce and Tourism ministries.

Fatai said he totally disagreed with Fisheries and Marine Resources Minister Nollen Leni's recent comment. Leni had said it is the problem of recipients if they do not use the money for its intended purpose.

Leni held the Fisheries portfolio during the Sogavare Government and was one of the ministers who switched sides. He now holds the same portfolios in the Sikua Government.

Leni told Solomon Star it is not his business whether or not recipients use the money for the intended purpose.

Fatai said: "I totally disagree with this comment in the strongest terms for a Minister of the Crown to say that."

Fatai said that is a clear breach of financial instructions and the public finance and audit act.

This means money is spent by the Government in accordance with the intention of Parliament in approving this.

"This is the people's money," Fatai said.

Fatai said he is also concerned that despite all the good work his office does, especially checking and auditing projects, nothing seems to have come out of it.

"It seems it is business as usual, even after we made our audit reports," he said. "No action is taken.

"This is people's money we are dealing with."

Fatai said it is the job of every permanent secretary to ensure that public funds are used in the proper manner.

A. Samoa bill exempts doctors from exam

PAGO PAGO, American Samoa (Samoa News)—The Senate has passed legislation that would 'grandfather in' non U.S. certified doctors working at LBJ Medical Center, thus exempting them from taking the U.S. Medical Licensing Exam (USMLE).

The bill states that individuals holding a license to practice medicine or dentistry issued by the Health Services Regulatory Board (HSRB) on or prior to Dec. 17, 2007 shall be considered "as qualified heath care personnel, having met standards of education, training and experience acceptable for licensing in American Samoa and shall be deemed duly licensed..."

Prior to yesterday's vote, the Senate added amendments approved on Tuesday. One major amendment is that the Health Services Regulatory Board will be composed of 8 individuals appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate.

Current laws does not require Senate approval of the board which is comprised of a chairman designated by the governor, one physician, a public health officer, a registered nurse, a medical officer, a dentist, a licensed practical nurse and a representative from the American Samoa Community College school of nursing program.

New Caledonia visitors at 100,000 in '07

SUVA, Fiji (Oceania Flash)—New Caledonia's arrivals for 2007 have again totaled just over 100,000.

The latest figures, which were published by local statistical institute ISEE earlier this year, place the tourism arrivals at exactly 103,363 visitors throughout last year.

Traditionally, the bulk of New Caledonia's visitors comes from metropolitan France, but also, regionally, from Japan, Australia and New Zealand.

The 100,000 mark has been a recurrent feature in New Caledonia's arrival statistics for the past five years.

For the past three years, tourism and hospitality stakeholders have tried to tackle the issue by holding roundtables locally known as "Assises" (sittings).

Some of the recurrent outcomes and recommendations have included the need to place an emphasis on a united front in terms of destination promotion.

AMENDED INVITATION FOR BIDS
WATER TASK FORCE
IFB08-GOV-042

Governor Benigno R. Fitial and Lieutenant Governor Timothy P. Villagomez, through the CNMI Water Task Force, are soliciting sealed bids for the CAPITOL HILL 1.0 MILLION GALLON RESERVOIR REHABILITATION PROJECT in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

A bid guarantee of 15 percent of the total bid price must accompany the bids. The security may be in certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond executed by a surety company licensed to do business in theCNMI.

The Contractor will be required to submit payment and performance bonds from a U.S. Treasury listed company. The Contractor will also be required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal laws including the Davis Bacon Act.

The project consists, in general, but is not limited to:

1. General cleaning of the interior of the tank, including removal of all accumulated sediments on the floor of the tank. Sediments to be disposed of at an acceptable location such as the Marpi Sanitary Landfill.
2. General cleaning of the tank exterior, including the removal of all plant growth on the roof, water blasting of the tank exterior and removal of all debris.
3. Mobilization for the interior and exterior painting including the demolition and removal of existing appurtenances and accessories, and the installation of new accessories as specified in Section 10200, including interior and exterior ladders, drying of the interior of the tank, patching cracks and crevices, and sand blasting where required for a smooth surface. The tank floor may require patching or a topping of concrete.
4. Painting the interior and exterior surfaces. The specifications Section 09810 for the exterior coating and Section 09800 for the interior coating storage pond, specify a particular painting product and paint system, but the specifications allow the contractor to bid an "or equal", paint system. The paint system bid must be an integrated system whereby the manufacturer certifies and warranties the product for a minimum of five years. The painting system shall be compatible with the surface preparation products and be acceptable by the US EPA for use in a potable water reservoir.
5. Periodic inspections, verification of paint thicknesses and leak testing as well as the final clean-up shall be considered a part of the total contract performance. All records shall be turned over to the Project Engineer upon completion and acceptance of the work.

A non-refundable payment of $150 is required for each set of Plans, Specifications, and Proposal Forms, available on or after **February 20, 2008** at the Water Task Force Office, Capitol Hill, Saipan. A mandatory pre-bid conference for this project is scheduled at 10:00 a.m., on **February 25, 2008**, at the WTF Conference Room, Saipan. A project site visit is included as a part of the pre-bid meeting.

All inquiries shall be in writing and address to Pedro Sasamoto, Program Manager, Caller Box 10007, Saipan, MP 96950 or fax to (670) 664-2279, no later than. **February 25, 2008**.

Bidding procedures shall be in full compliance with the CNMI Procurement Regulations, dated May 24, 2001, except Article 7, "Local Business Preference", amended by Public Laws 15-95 and Public Law 15-118, is not available to local bidders in this procurement because its use is prohibited by the Federal lawgranting the funds for this project.

Sealed bids shall be identified on outside of the envelope by Invitation for Bids No. IFB08-GOV-042. An original and four copies of the bid must be submitted to the Procurement and Supply Office, Lower Base, Saipan before 3:00 pm, on, **March 3, 2008**. Bidders located outside of the CNMI may obtain an additional seven (7) working days for the receipt of their bids by submitting a Notice of Intent to bid. Notices of Intent to Bid must be received by the Director of Procurement and Supply no later than 3:00 pm local time, M**arch 3, 2008**, and must be transmitted via facsimile to (670) 664-1515, or via email to procurement@pticom.com. For bidders outside the CNMI, an original and four copies of sealed bids must be postmarked by the U.S. Postal Service, the official government postal service of a foreign country, or a commercial courier, no later than **March 3, 2008**, and must be received no later than **March 12, 2008**. Note that failure to submit the required number of copies may be cause for rejection of a bid.

Bids will be publicly opened and read at the Division of Procurement and Supply, Lower Base, Saipan, at 3:00 pm, local time March 13, 2008. However, if no Notices of Intent to bid were received from bidders outside the CNMI, bids will be opened at 3:00 pm, local time on March 4, 2008.

This project is funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), under its Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) provided to the Commonwealth. This project is also subject to Section 3 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1968 which requires recipients of HUD funds and contractors to help insure that the economic opportunities generated by these HUD funds are provided to local low-income residents and the businesses that serve them "to the maximum extent feasible".

All bidders are hereby notified that the CNMI Government will affirmatively insure that in any contract entered into pursuant to this solicitation, women and small business enterprises will be afforded full opportunity to submit proposals and will not be discriminated against on grounds of race, color, national origin, political affiliation, creed, sex, religion, age, familial status, and disability status.

All bid documents received shall become the sole property of the CNMI Government. The Government reserves the right to reject any or all bids and to waive any imperfection in a bid proposal that does not affect the elements of price, quantity, and delivery of the bid, in the best interest of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

/s/ Timothy P. Villagomez
Lieutenant Governor/Contracting Officer

/s/ Herman S. Sablan
Director, Procurement and Supply

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
Volume XVIII, Issue No. 51

Published daily at 2/F CIC Centre,
Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, CNMI
Mailing Address: PMB 34, Box 10001, Saipan, MP, 96950

Lynn A. Knight PUBLISHER
Jayvee L. Vallejera EDITOR
Mark Rabago ASSISTANT EDITOR

MEMBER
The Associated Press Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

Independent Kosovo

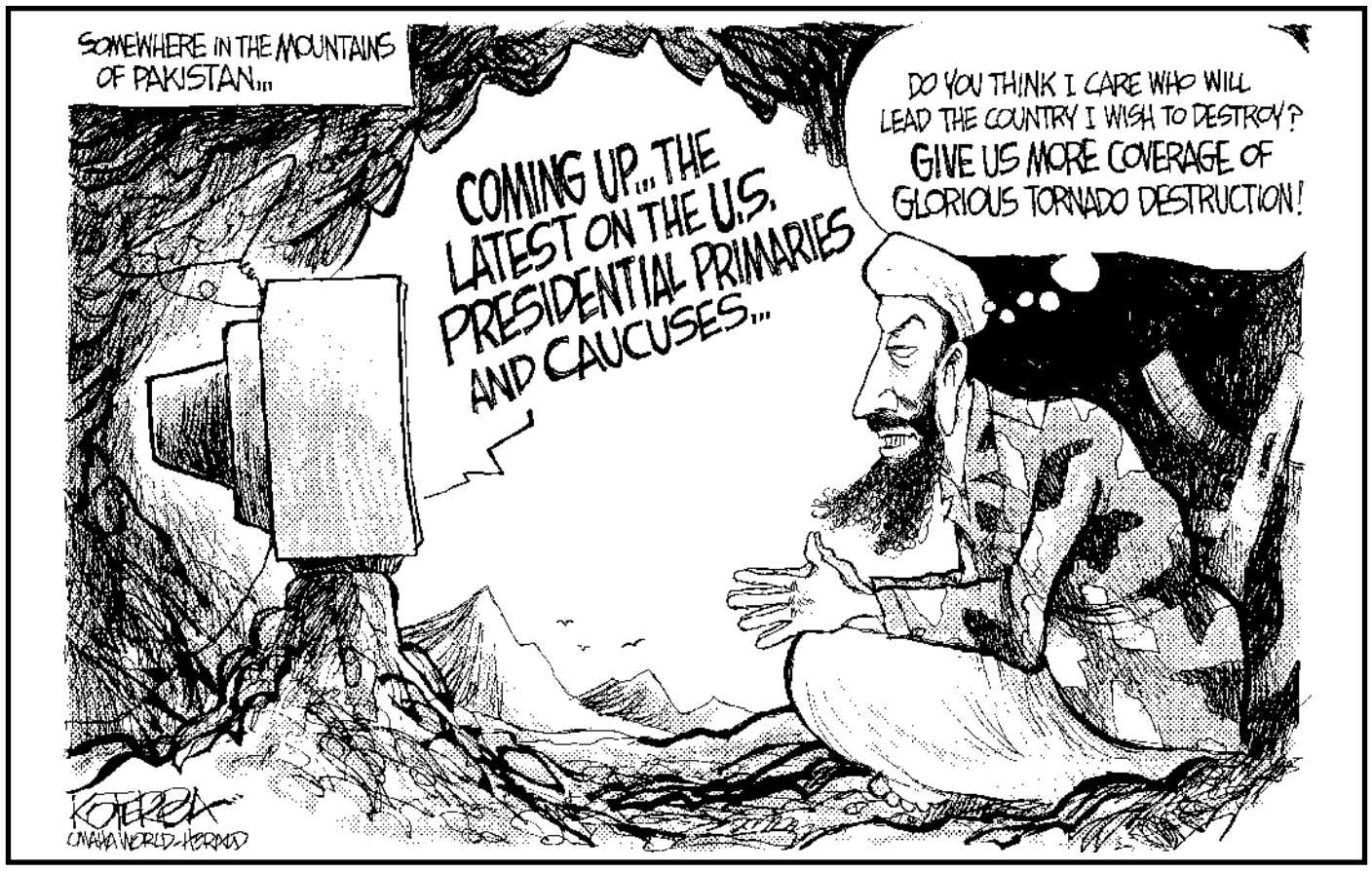
The declaration of independence this week by the Balkan province of Kosovo was both inevitable and long overdue. Kosovo, whose population is more than 90 percent ethnic Albanian, has been governed by the United Nations since 1999, when NATO intervened to stop a brutal campaign of ethnic cleansing by the Serbian army. That campaign and the years of repression that preceded it forfeited Serbia's right to hold on to the province; as a practical matter the Albanian majority would never have peacefully accepted renewed rule from Belgrade. The democratically elected government will be closely assisted and overseen by a large mission of the European Union, while 16,000 NATO troops—including 1,400 Americans—will provide security. If all goes well, Kosovo and the other independent pieces of the former Yugoslavia, including Serbia, will eventually be reunited inside the European Union.

This logical step toward completing a united and democratic Europe would have occurred years ago if not for the lingering and poisonous nationalism of Serbia and its encouragement by Vladimir Putin's Russia. Serbian politicians of all stripes have ardently declared they will never accept Kosovo's independence, while Mr. Putin has prevented the U.N. Security Council from adopting the careful scheme a mediator worked out more than a year ago. European governments frightened by the prospect of Serbian-sponsored violence or a move by Russia to recognize breakaway provinces elsewhere in Europe dithered for months before agreeing to deploy the new E.U. mission.

So far it appears that the backlash against the new state will be containable, and the fears—which were echoed by some American conservatives—overblown. Both Russia and Serbia have backed down a little, swearing off the recognition of other splinter states or the use of violence. Up to 100 countries are expected to recognize Kosovo, including the United States, Britain, France, Germany and most of the other E.U. members. Serbian President Boris Tadic won re-election two weeks ago on a platform of moving Serbia toward the European Union despite its recognition of Kosovo.

The Kosovo government of Hashim Thaci has promised "security for all citizens"; he will need to act aggressively on that pledge and prevent any incitement against the 100,000 Serbs remaining in Kosovo. It is NATO's job to prevent violence by either community; Western troops will be needed for the foreseeable future. In the end, though, a peaceful and prosperous future in the Balkans will depend on the Serbs. If they choose to break with their ugly history of nationalism and embrace a liberal democratic future inside the European Union, Kosovo's course can also be smooth. If they choose endless and futile resistance to Kosovo's independence, the Serbs will isolate themselves from Europe and likely become vassals of Russia. Now is the time for Mr. Tadic and other would-be modernizers of Serbia to match their convictions with courage.

(c) 2008, The Washington Post


SOMEWHERE IN THE MOUNTAINS OF PAKISTAN...
COMING UP... THE LATEST ON THE U.S. PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARIES AND CAUCUSES...
DO YOU THINK I CARE WHO WILL LEAD THE COUNTRY I WISH TO DESTROY? GIVE US MORE COVERAGE OF GLORIOUS TORNADO DESTRUCTION!
KOTERBA
OMAHA WORLD-HERALD

A look back to a different island and time

Last of a two-part series

By WILLIAM H. STEWART
Special to the Saipan Tribune

William H. Stewart is an economist, historian, and military cartographer.

As a result of the seemingly unrestrained growth occurring at the time of the CNMI's economic takeoff in the mid-'80s, various existing laws and regulations on the books at the time were either strengthened or new ones imposed.

I once examined every permitting requirement and regulation in force in the NMI which in one way or the other should be of concern to potential investors, both foreign and domestic. I prepared a summary for their use and guidance. These included development permits and regulations, coastal permits, CUC permits, environmental quality permits, critical habitat designated areas, forestry and historic preservation permits, zoning, business permits and many others, including federal permits required by the Corps of Engineers, EPA, and the Coast Guard.

There are permits and licenses required for a variety of professions: attorneys, medical and dental services, commercial fishing, food handlers, alcoholic beverage control, taxi operation, foreign investment, various entry permits (short- and long-term), corporate requirements, licenses for businesses and banking, foreign currency exchange regulations, and the sale of insurance, to mention only a few. Federal regulations govern occupational safety and health (OSHA), labor relations, civil rights, federal contracts, fair labor standards, hours worked, overtime, etc. NMI labor laws establish requirements for employing nonresident workers, worker's compensation, entry permits for relatives for nonresident workers, IR residency, and many others. All very necessary to be sure but I expect very confusing to the foreign investor without adequate assistance by administering staff.

It is my belief that in an area such as the NMI which desires to encourage foreign investment that it would be quite helpful if the laws and regulations effecting such investment were summarized for the benefit of those investors who may not be familiar with the English language. Even so, compliance with some regulations are often difficult and expensive to achieve.

As a single case in point as an example of government "regulatory creativity," consider the firm of Haas & Hainie and their proposed Obygan Resort and Golf Course of some years back—a project which now appears to have been abandoned many years ago. As near as I have been able to determine, the company had a permit request pending with the Fish and Wildlife Service for permission to collect ("take") a rather large number of endangered bird species which were believed would be lost during the construction of a golf course. The F&WS would not issue a permit without there being appropriate mitigation for the species.

The CNMI created the Saipan Upland Mitigation Bank (basically the old Marpi Commonwealth Forest) to assist Haas & Hainie and another large golf course project planned for the northern part of the island with a similar problem. The concept of the Bank was based on the principle that each bird pair was worth so many credits which could be traded for cash (to be used for the conservation of the endangered species in the Marpi area) as a mitigation measure. Thus, if Hass & Hainie found 15 endangered bird pairs (or whatever number) on their proposed project site and could not avoid "taking" them in order to complete the project, then they could buy 15 credits in the Bank as mitigation for the unavoidable collection. I don't recall the price of a "bird pair credit." The idea being that the development of the project could proceed but the developers would have to pay for the privilege of taking the endangered species, and the funds collected would be used to enhance the bird's habitat elsewhere, thereby providing sufficient resources so that the species didn't decline even further. So the story goes.

Apparently, the company didn't—or couldn't—come up with an adequate plan to recover birds, or perhaps they just gave up. Whatever—no matter—the birds are there and the golf course is not.

The government really should have asked my advice. I recall my dear sweet ol' granny telling me when I was about 5 years old that if I could sneak up on a bird and put salt on its tail, I could catch it. Let me peer through the tall grass and tell one and all that that is very difficult, for birds have an unusual tendency to fly away.

Seriously, I believe some environmental and endangered species policies as presently structured such as, for example, the above should be examined in the light of the following criteria:

1. Will a (particular) law or regulation encourage or restrict economic growth?

2. Could its abandonment, repeal or modification eventually and possibly injure the environment? If so, to what "documented and measurable" extent?

3. If the environment is compromised, would the "measurable" economic benefit trade-off be worth it?

4. What role has the federal Environmental Protection Agency polices and regulations served to act adversely on economic growth? If proven to have adversely influenced "desirable" growth, can a waiver be obtained for specific projects?

Too often the required environmental impact statements have been one-sided, neglecting to balance the issue against economic benefits, either those lost or gained as a result of the issue.

The above are just a few reasonable issues I believe should be considered toward arriving at a realistic trade-off between preservation and economic growth. Mind you, I'm not suggesting all environmental and endangered species laws as regulations be repealed; many are valuable, necessary and worthwhile. I am advocating taking a second look at those that may be hindering economic growth with the objective of determining if an accommodation can be found to satisfy both objectives. Hopefully, those interested in the issue can give it some thought.

See A LOOK next page

EDITORIAL POLICY The *Saipan Tribune* welcomes comments on any article, column, editorial, or topic that may be of interest to the public. Letters to the editor must include the name, address, and contact number of the contributor. Letters that are critical in nature should focus on issues, not personalities. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, CIC Centre, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Selling with passion: Using the code-cracker

THE SAIPANPRENEUR PROJECT *Creating economic success for the CNMI*

By WALT F.J. GOODRIDGE
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Send article suggestions, entrepreneur nominations and feedback about this article to walt@passionprofit.com.

The only way to take control of your life, raise your standard of living and move beyond merely surviving is to create your own unique product or service that you offer to increasing numbers of people in exchange for the things of value that you desire. This simple formula applies to countries as well as people. A self-sufficient economy has its own products or services of value to export to the world. Similarly, a self-sufficient individual has something of value to exchange in the global marketplace. That thing of value is based on your natural talent, skill, or interest—in other words, your passion!

The following is an excerpt from the book *Turn Your Passion Into* Profit by Walt Goodridge:

Not finding the right audience? Website not selling? Brochure not producing results? Ad copy not pulling prospects? Sales pitch not wowing them? Prospects not turning into customers? Customers not turning into repeat buyers? Whatever selling challenge you have can be solved by applying one or more of the Code Cracker principles. They represent the most powerful secrets I've learned about selling that have helped me crack codes in just about every venture I or my clients have launched. They include techniques, strategies, mindsets, perspectives and truths about human nature that are critical to everyone who wants to turn their passion into profit.

Effective marketing is nothing more than communicating an idea from within the right mindset. In order to have the right mindset, you need to know who you're speaking to, what they want to hear, and you have to know the words to use to say it to them. Here then, are the Mindset secrets which can help you sell effectively.

MINDSET: Put People First

People don't care how much you know, until they know how much you care. Make customer service an important part of your business and treat your customers, suppliers and employees well. Do whatever it takes to make a good impression with everyone who does business with you. Sometimes it means refunding the money of an angry customer, even if he or she is in the wrong. Sometimes it means shipping out a product overnight at your expense even though it means you make no money on the sale.

One unhappy customer can do more to damage your reputation than ten happy customers will do to improve it. Are you sending a message to customers that you're in it just for the money? Put people first.

MINDSET: There's a process to selling: Get Attention, Spark Interest, Elicit Desire, Move to Action (AIDA)

In sales workshops, people are taught to take their prospective customers through a four-step process known as AIDA in order to make a sale. A.I.D.A. stands for Attention, Interest, Desire, and Action. Whether you're selling in person, by mail, over the Internet, or by phone, the process is the same.

The first step in making a sale is to get your customer's attention. If you're dealing with them personally, you probably already have their attention. If you're placing an ad, your headline will be what grabs their attention. The next step is to arouse their interest. To do this, you may ask a leading question—a question that makes them think and which requires an answer. The quicker and more often you can get your customer to say the word "yes" either out loud or to themselves, the closer you are to making a sale. Ask: "Would your life be different if you had all the money in the world?" "Are you interested in feeling healthy?" "Do you like to have fun?" "Want to lose weight?" "Need more cash?" Chances are good that you'll get a yes to those questions.

The next step is to build on that interest and turn it into desire. Here's where you need to appeal to their emotions by showing how your product or service fulfills their wants and needs and helps them avoid their dislikes. (Remember the Value Tree) Finally, move your customer to action by overcoming any objections they may have, then asking for the sale.

MINDSET: Get Excited

Enthusiasm sells. When you talk about your passion you need to get excited if you want to sell more. I'm often asked, "What if I'm not the type of person who gets excited?" My answer: "Get excited, anyway!"

Plain and simple. If speaking excitedly is not something you are comfortable doing, then get uncomfortable. If it's just not you, then become it. It all starts with you. Even if you hire someone to be a cheerleader for you and your product, you need to communicate your excitement to them, or they won't get excited about it either.

People respond to excitement. As one sales expert says, "people are more impressed by the height of your enthusiasm than the depth of your knowledge." Set yourself on fire and people will come and watch you burn! (And hopefully they'll buy something from you while you sizzle!)

In my workshops and private sessions, I have attendees stand up and practice selling their passion with passion to the audience. It's an effective way to have people step outside of their comfort zones.

I'll also add that you should be nice, smile, greet people, treat others the way they want to be treated, remember peoples' names, and birthdays, deliver what you promise and be honest in all your dealings--and do it all with excitement!

MINDSET: Always have a plan B (or C, D, E, F and G)

NEVER, ever let any ONE person be the only key to your success. As I always say to people who get discouraged by rejection, "no one person has the key to EVERY door that leads to success." Just because one distributor won't carry your product doesn't mean you're doomed. Just because the most powerful newspaper in the country doesn't write a story about your novel, doesn't mean it'll never be read, UNLESS you believe it.

There is ALWAYS a way to get things done. When you make your plans, think positively and expect success, but always ask yourself, "what will I do if this plan doesn't work? What's my Plan B?" Even if it means selling your product yourself on the Internet, or out of the back of a van, there's a way. Find a way, even if it means having someone else talk to the same distributor about your product. "Plan B Thinking" means that no one will ever stand in the way of your success. As Bob Marley says, "When one door is closed, another is open!"

MINDSET: People buy based on Emotion, not Logic

People make emotional decisions. Every decision, from whom we marry, what clothes we wear, to what color and model car we buy, is made emotionally. Although we may have a host of logical reasons to convince ourselves that we made the best decision, the truth is the decision itself is usually emotionally motivated. Advertisers have known this for years. That's why they can sell cigarettes without ever showing a picture of one. That's why food ads often show more images of smiling faces than lists of ingredients. That's why athletes and performers are paid tremendous sums of money to endorse products. People identify positive emotions with their favorite celebrities, and will, by association, have positive emotions with the products those stars are linked with.

Your mission, therefore, is to create positive emotional associations in your customers' minds to the product or service you are selling.

■ ■ ■

For more on the Code Cracker, check out Turn Your Passion Into Profit at www.passionprofit.com!

■ ■ ■

Until next week, remember, success is a journey, not a destination!

Walt F.J. Goodridge is author of 12 books including Turn Your Passion Into Profit. *Walt offers coaching and workshops to help people pursue and profit from their passions. Originally from the island of Jamaica, Walt has grown several successful businesses in the US, and now makes his home here in Saipan. To learn more about the Saipanpreneur Project and Walt's philosophy and formula visit www.saipanpreneur.com and www.passionprofit.com.*

Letter to the Editor

Malite heirs speak out

The Maliti heirs have grown increasingly unhappy with attorneys Antonio Atalig and Reynaldo Yana's recent releases to the media concerning the estate of Angel Maliti. We are even more concerned that the *Saipan Tribune* has decided that their libelous dribble is newsworthy enough to publish. We have previously sat quietly by and allowed our attorney to speak for us in the court. Now, we cannot let their most recent baseless attacks against Judge Govendo in the media go unanswered. Especially when they claim to speak or act on behalf of our family.

We would like to set the record straight and make one thing perfectly clear once and for all. Neither Mr. Atalig nor Mr. Yana represent the Maliti family, or the estate of Angel Maliti. Since the time they managed to get a secret order from the court giving them almost $1.2 million, it has become obvious that they are only representing themselves. Although they claim to have represented the former administrator, Jesus Tudela, it is apparent that they were not so interested in representing him as they were in using him to siphon money out of the estate and into their own pockets. Mr. Atalig's claim that "the removal of Tudela is a complete attack on the Maliti family by the court" as reported in the *Tribune* on Feb. 18, 2008, is utterly ridiculous. Every single one of the uncontested heirs, except for perhaps, Mr. Tudela's wife, signed a petition to remove him. The family of Angel Maliti, is extremely grateful that Judge Govendo has recognized that, with the help of Mr. Tudela, Mr. Atalig and Mr. Yana were systematically attempting to plunder the estate, with absolutely no thought of the heirs, or their duties to protect the estate.

Mr. Atalig claims that our motion to disqualify Chief Justice Demapan was a "cheap shot." Nothing could be further from the truth. It was not difficult to see the potential bias of Chief Justice Demapan in dealing with matters which so drastically affected not only his former law partner, but also his own brother who managed to walk away with more than $200,000 from the Maliti estate. The decision to seek the disqualification of the Chief Justice was not made by our attorney, nor was it a "cheap shot." We, as a family, made the decision because we believed, and still believe, that the Chief Justice cannot act fairly and impartially in dealing with any of the issues involving Judge Govendo's finding that Mr. Atalig and Mr. Yana are in contempt of court.

Mr. Atalig, our attorney has done nothing to attack the integrity of the court as you claim. The same cannot be said for you, as your attacks have been numerous. The accusations you made in the February 18, 2008 *Tribune* are only your most recent attack. These were preceded by numerous similar media releases. You should also not forget that you have filed a motion to disqualify every judge in the Superior Court who did not voluntarily step aside, except the one who gave you over a million dollars from the Maliti estate, money which you have been ordered to return. The unfounded and unsupportable accusations you have made against Judge Wiseman, Judge Govendo and Judge Naraja in order to protect your "fees" have been so shameful and slanderous we will not lend them any legitimacy by repeating them here. We will only remind you that as a result of your previous assaults on the integrity of the judiciary, you are still facing at least two more contempt proceedings for which we are merely awaiting decisions from the judges that you have shamelessly and baselessly attacked.

With your most recent press releases, it seems that you have become emboldened because you have gotten the Supreme Court to stay your suspension to practice law. Do not get too bold. We understand that the Supreme Court has only questioned the authority of the Superior Court to issue your suspension sanction. No one in the Supreme Court, not even the Chief Justice, has given any indication that Judge Govendo was mistaken in finding you in contempt, or that you did not commit the ethical violations cited in his Order finding you in contempt. It is the Maliti family's hope that if the Supreme Court decides that Judge Govendo does not have the power to suspend an attorney, it will invoke its own power to do the same. And if and when your suspension, or worse, is reinstated, please do not go to the media to complain that the decision was an attack on the Maliti family. It won't be.

Lourdes Rangamar
Jimmy Sablan
Esther Sound
Rombert Sinounou

A LOOK

From Page 10

With respect to certain regulations, don't misunderstand the point I wish to make. I can appreciate the value of preserving the environment and endangered species. I also understand the need for people to earn a living, particularly in areas where the options may be limited. I simply believe that where a job creating, taxpaying investment is at stake because of a conflict with some environmental regulation that there should be an opportunity for binding facilitation when seeking a solution to the problem and that such a determination be made by a council of unbiased, disinterested persons.

Of course, in many instances the issue is one of federal law. There is increasing realization among some members of Congress that stringent environmental laws have, in some instances, contributed to the country's reduced economic activity and contributed to outsourcing some job categories. A U.S. congressman recently addressed this very subject on C-SPAN.

Sattelite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲81° ▼75°	▲82° ▼75°	▲83° ▼75°	▲82° ▼76°	▲82° ▼76°

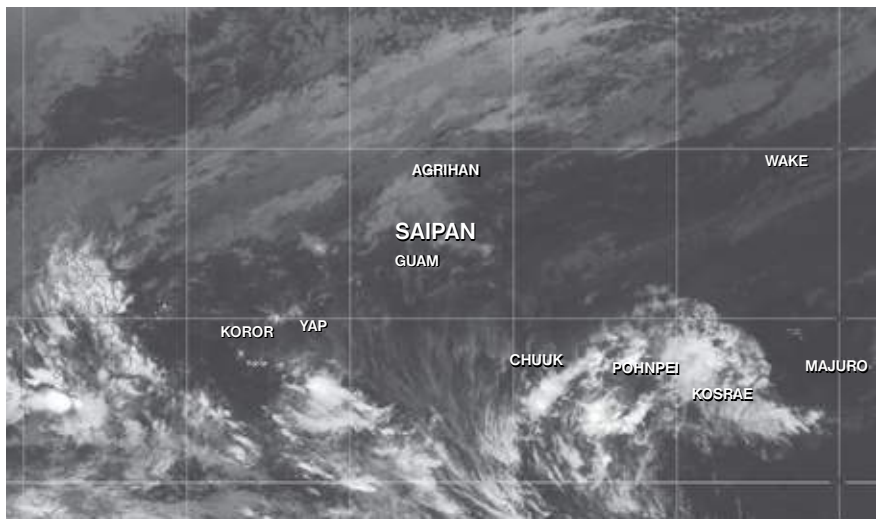
Micronesia

Guam and Rota	Mostly Cloudy	▲84	▼76
Palau	Partly Sunny	▲90	▼78
Yap	Mostly Sunny	▲86	▼77
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	▲88	▼80
Pohnpei	Partly Sunny	▲86	▼76
Kosrae	Mostly Sunny	▲89	▼76
Majuro	Mostly Cloudy	▲83	▼74

Around The Globe

Auckland	Mostly Sunny	▲71	▼58
Beijing	Sunny	▲43	▼24
Hong Kong	Partly Sunny	▲67	▼61
Honolulu	Cloudy	▲79	▼67
London	Mostly Cloudy	▲50	▼37
Los Angeles	Mostly Cloudy	▲65	▼50
Manila	Thunderstorms	▲80	▼75
Melbourne	Rain	▲77	▼53
Miami	Cloudy	▲80	▼70
New York	Flurries	▲35	▼24
Osaka	Partly Sunny	▲48	▼30
Paris	Rain	▲48	▼43
Pusan	Sunny	▲53	▼29
Rome	Partly Sunny	▲54	▼45
Salem	Showers	▲54	▼39
San Francisco	Cloudy	▲58	▼49
Seoul	Sunny	▲39	▼17
Tokyo	Mostly Sunny	▲49	▼38
Washington, DC	Mostly Cloudy	▲45	▼23

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00PM, TUESDAY, FEB. 19, 2008
Western North Pacific between Equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A shear line stretches southwestward from 23N180 to south of Wake Island at 17N167E to south of Guam at 10N144E. Patchy clouds and rain are seen along and up to 200 miles northwest of this shear line. An old cold front extends southwestward from 25N173E to 21N165E, then continues as a shear line through the Northern Marianas at 16N146E to 14N130E and beyond. Extensive cloudiness and scattered showers are found along and north of this boundary to beyond 25N. Scattered showers are also found over Guam, Rota, Tinian and Saipan within 80 miles of a line from 14N143E to 14N149E. A near-equatorial trough runs eastward from 3N130E through a weak circulation centered near 2N140E to end at EQ143E. Scattered showers and a few thunderstorms are occurring south of Yap and Koror within 100 miles of a line from 7N137E to EQ145E. Scattered showers can also be found along the trough axis within 80 miles of a line from 4N130E to EQ140E.A trade-wind disturbance is producing scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms over Pohnpei but south of Chuuk or south of a line from 4N148E to 9N157E. Scattered showers are forming over Kosrae within 170 miles of a line from 9N160E to 3N167E. Trade-wind convergence is generating scattered showers east of Majuro between 5N and 10N from 173E to 180.

Tides

Saipan Harbor

01:10AM Today	Low Tide:	0.4 Feet
08:08AM Today	High Tide:	1.9 Feet
01:39PM Today	Low Tide:	1.0 Feet
06:41PM Today	High Tide:	1.9 Feet

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:40AM	6:22PM
Thursday	6:39AM	6:22PM
Friday	6:39AM	6:23PM
Saturday	6:38AM	6:23PM
Sunday	6:38AM	6:23PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	05:36PM	05:48AM
Thursday	06:30PM	06:30AM
Friday	07:21PM	07:08AM
Saturday	08:10PM	07:44AM
Sunday	08:59PM	08:20AM

GET YOUR PICTURES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS PUBLISHED—FOR FREE

The *Saipan Tribune* accepts for FREE publication the following:

PICTURES

- ISLAND SNAPSHOTS
  Birthdays, baptisms, christenings, family gatherings, reunions, club activities, and other community-related events.
- BIRTHDAY GREETINGS
  A way for families and friends to greet their loved ones, accompanied by a picture of the person celebrating his/her birthday.
- BUSINESS
  Corporate donations, volunteer work, promotions, granting of awards, team-building exercises, meetings and other activities by members of the business community.
- SAMU'T SARI
  Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.
- TRAVELOGUE
  Pictures of off-island travels. Contributors may submit up to 10 pictures for consideration.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- COMMUNITY BRIEFS
  Announcements of upcoming activities of organizations, community clubs, government agencies, and private companies.
- CAMPUS BULLETIN
  Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

REQUIREMENTS

For pictures:

- Photos should be original and not copyrighted. Contributors must have the right to allow the *Saipan Tribune* to publish the pictures.
- Digital pictures should be high-resolution (minimum of 800kb).
- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
- Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
- For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.

For announcements:

- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and a phone number.
- Must be submitted no later than 12 noon to make it to next day's edition.

HOW TO SUBMIT

- E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com or jayvee_vallejera@saipantribune.com.
- Fax: (670) 235-3740
- Mail: PMB 34, P.O. Box 10001, Saipan, CNMI 96950
- Drop off: 2nd Floor, CIC Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan
  To check if contributions are received, call (670) 235-6397, 235-2440, 235-8747

POLICY

- The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to accept or reject a contribution for publication; the right to edit all contributions, the date of publication, size of the picture, and page placement; and the right to publish contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats.
- The *Saipan Tribune* will decide how often community announcements are going to be published.
- For Travelogue, the *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to choose which pictures to publish.

NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any PTI cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

NEWS DESK For news tips, corrections and requests for news coverage, call (670) 235-NEWS (6397), 235-2440, fax 235,3740. E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com. Website:www.saipantribune.com.

CUSTOMER SERVICE For inquiries, purchase of back issues and complaints, call (670) 235-8747, 235-2440, fax 235-3740.

SUBSCRIPTION Published Monday to Sunday, Saipan Tribune offers door-to-door on-island delivery at an annual rate of $182. Off-island subscription rate is $376 per year. For additional subscription information, call (670) 235-8747 or 235-2769, or fax 235-3740.

ADVERTISING For inquiries contact (670) 235-2769. E-mail: sales@saipantribune.com

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF FEBRUARY 15, 2008

DEPARTURES

Saipan-Rota			
CO 9313	8:30am	9:05am	3,4,7
Saipan-Guam			
CO9317	5:00am	5:50am	Daily
CO9597	8:30am	9:20am	1,2,5,6
CO9313	8:30am	10:00am	3,4,7 via Rota
CO9601	12:30pm	1:20pm	Daily
CO9603	3:30pm	4:20pm	Daily
CO9605	6:30pm	7:20pm	Daily
CO9599	9:30pm	10:20pm	Daily
Saipan-Narita			
NW 078	8:25am	1:30pm	Daily via Nagoya
NW 075	4:50pm	7:30pm	Daily
Saipan-Osaka			
NW 083	4:30pm	7:25pm	Daily
Saipan-Nagoya			
NW 078	8:25am	11:05am	Daily
Saipan-Manila			
CO 895	4:45pm	6:35pm	6
CO 895	6:45pm	8:35pm	3
Saipan-Seoul			
OZ 604	2:10am	6:00am	1
OZ 604	2:40am	6:30am	2,3,4,5,6,7
OZ 606	3:30pm	7:00pm	2,4,6,7
Saipan-Busan			
OZ 608	4:00am	7:35am	1,4,5,7
Saipan-Guanzhou			
CZ 3008	5:00am	8:00am	2,6
Saipan-Shanghai			
MU 590	4:20am	7:00am	2,6
Guam-Manila			
CO 891	6:00am	10:30am	3 via Yap and Koror
CO 893	6:30am	8:05am	6
CO 893	8:25am	10:00am	2,7
CO 893	5:50pm	9:10pm	5 via Koror
CO 933	8:00pm	9:40pm	Daily
PR 111	6:00am	7:45am	1,2,4,6,7
Guam-Hongkong			
CO 909	7:45pm	10:40pm	1,5
Guam-Rota			
CO 9598	10:15am	10:45am	1,2,6

ARRIVALS

Rota-Saipan			
CO 9598	11:10am	11:45am	1,2,6
Guam-Saipan			
CO 9316	2:30am	3:20am	Daily
CO9596	7:00am	7:50am	Daily
CO9598	10:15am	11:45am	1,2,6 via Rota
CO9600	10:45am	11:35am	3,4,5,7
CO9602	2:00pm	2:50pm	Daily
CO9604	5:00pm	5:50pm	Daily
CO9606	8:00pm	8:50pm	Daily
Narita-Saipan			
NW 076	10:35am	3:05pm	Daily
NW 077	6:15pm	1:10am+1	Daily via Nagoya
Osaka-Saipan			
NW 084	10:40am	3:10pm	Daily
Nagoya-Saipan			
NW 077	8:45pm	1:10am+1	Daily
Manila-Saipan			
CO 890	9:15am	2:55pm	6
CO 890	11:45am	5:35pm	3
Seoul-Saipan			
OZ 605	9:00am	2:30pm	2,4,6,7
OZ 603	7:40pm	1:00am+1	7
OZ 603	8:10pm	1:30am+1	1,2,3,4,5,6
Busan-Saipan			
OZ 607	9:30pm	2:50am+1	3,4,6,7
Guanzhou-Saipan			
CZ 3007	8:00pm	4:00am+1	1,5
Shanghai-Saipan			
MU 589	8:05pm	3:00am+1	1,5
Manila-Guam			
CO 894	11:20am	4:55pm	2,7
CO 894	7:45pm	1:20am+1	6
CO 892	9:45pm	5:25am+1	3 via Koror
CO 892	9:45pm	6:30am+1	3 via Koror and Yap
CO 892	10:10pm	5:30am+1	5 via Koror
CO 934	11:10pm	4:40am+1	Daily
PR 110	10:15pm	4:00am+1	1,3,5,6,7
Hongkong-Guam			
CO 910	11:40pm	6:20am+1	1,5
Rota-Guam			
CO 9313	9:30am	10:00am	3,4,7

Editor's Note: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); CO: Continental; PR: Philippine Airlines; CZ: China Southern; CA: Air China; NW: Northwest; JO: Japan Airlines; OZ: Asiana; MU: China Eastern ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
Guam-Rota			
FRE 100	7:00am	7:30am	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 100	7:50am	8:20am	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 200	9:00am	9:30am	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 200	9:50am	10:15am	Daily
Guam-Rota			
FRE 300	4:00pm	4:30pm	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 300	4:50pm	5:25pm	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 400	6:00pm	6:30pm	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 400	6:45pm	7:15pm	Daily
Saipan-Tinian			
FRE 101	6:45am	6:55am	Daily
FRE 103	7:30am	7:40am	Daily
FRE 105	8:00am	8:10am	Daily
FRE 107	8:40am	8:50am	Daily
FRE 109*	9:10am	9:20am	Daily
FRE 111*	10:45am	10:55am	Daily

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
FRE 113	11:40am	11:50am	Daily
FRE 115	1:00pm	1:10pm	Daily
FRE 117	2:30pm	2:40pm	Daily
FRE 119	4:00pm	4:10pm	Daily
FRE 121	4:40pm	4:50pm	Daily
FRE 123 *	5:40pm	5:50pm	Daily
FRE 125 *	6:00pm	6:10pm	Daily
Tinian-Saipan w/ connecting flights to Rota or Guam**			
FRE 102	7:05am	7:15am	Daily
FRE 104	7:50am	8:00am	Daily
FRE 106**	8:20am	8:30am	Daily
FRE 108**	9:00am	9:10am	Daily
FRE 110	10:00am	10:10am	Daily
FRE 112	11:05am	11:15am	Daily
FRE 114	12:00pm	12:10pm	Daily
FRE 116	1:30pm	1:40pm	Daily
FRE 118	2:50pm	3:00pm	Daily
FRE 120**	4:20pm	4:30pm	Daily
FRE 122**	5:00pm	5:10pm	Daily
FRE 124	6:05pm	6:15pm	Daily
FRE 126	6:20pm	6:30pm	Daily

Letters to the Editor

Exploring geothermal energy for the CNMI: Asking the right questions

There has been a recent flurry of activity from the Governor's Office pertaining to geothermal energy for the CNMI. And the Governor has hired a very competent person with a good background in geothermal energy and its applications. All of this is a step in the right direction, and, although I remain a staunch advocate of the *new* nuclear option, I also recognize the fact, that, *where* feasible, geothermal energy is a great opportunity. But, *is* geothermal feasible in the CNMI? The Governor has set about traveling to and fro around the world "looking" at geothermal. Is this already the best option? Do we know, yet, whether or not the CNMI can support such a power source?

This is the first in a series of three letters, hopefully to enlighten the general public and provoke an open debate—before things get carried away and the public gets blindsided, again, by energy advocates who may or may not be doing what is in the best interest of the CNMI. Frankly, I don't think enough information has yet been developed at the local level to start gallivanting around "looking" at the geothermal option—and spending the rather large amounts of money (given the CNMI's current fiscal situation) such travels require.

Let me also preface these reports with the fact that I am not any kind of "expert" in the field of geothermal power—but I can (and do) read—a lot! And I go to the best resources available, all of which will be referenced throughout these letters so that you too may seek the "horse's mouth." I am also not in any way seeking to pooh pooh the Governor's quest; rather to obtain open and truthful answers to the many questions now before us. Hopefully, the Governor will respond positively rather than with politically expedient and vague propaganda and, thereby show the public that the CNMI is proceeding correctly.

The pursuit of alternative energy: I am concerned that the pursuit of geothermal alone may be to the detrimental exclusion of all other sources on a comparative basis—and that is unfair to the populace because it may lead to wasted time (precious) and wasted dollars (more precious). Remember the recent quest to convert the entire CNMI to a *billion*-dollar investment in wind that wouldn't have worked on that scale anyway? We have wasted enough time reaching for the silver bullet—but only the exotic ones, the exciting ones, the bandwagon ones, the flashy ones, the politically correct ones. But are any of these the *right* ones for us? So let's see how geothermal stacks up.

The questions: My very first question (and the one I consider most important) is: Has there been *any* substantive verification as to whether or not there is a viable geothermal source within the CNMI? Simply looking at a small volcanic island doesn't even begin to answer this. Certainly there IS heat there, but is it useful? Is it the right kind? What is the geothermal pool? What is its temperature? What kind of geothermal pool is it? Is it flash steam? Is it water, and what is its chemical makeup? Is it dry? How deep is it? Is it stable? What is the size and location, relative to the volcano? What is the surrounding geological makeup and stability? Is it porous and filled with fissures? Is it solid?

Without proper answers to these and many other basic questions, I believe it is a waste of time and money to even consider the option, let alone traveling. Even these basic determinations cost money—a lot of it; and this kind of determination *must* be accomplished first. Geothermal field exploration, development and confirmation is the very *first* step—and the riskiest. But without it, we are simply shooting in the dark—and wasting time. By the way, it takes from two to five years to open a geothermal field.

Well, that's enough of a first letter for now. I will be citing relevant portions of the 64-page, 2005 report from the "Geothermal Energy Association" for the U.S. Department of Energy for much of these letters; others will be referenced as needed. The GEA can be reached at 209 Pennsylvania Ave., SE; Washington D.C. 20003; (202) 459-5621 or, on the web at www.geo-energy.org. I look forward to being able to present relevant information in this and the next two letters and hope that discussion through this media will further the cause of safe, reliable and economical power for the CNMI. The public certainly deserves no less.

In this part, we've asked the questions that I feel should be answered before jumping into the fire; questions that I hope the Governor's Office and/or the Legislature has—or will—answer. In part 2, we'll look at initial factors affecting geothermal installations and in part 3, how to get the power from the heat to you.

Dr. Thomas D. Arkle Jr.
San Jose, Tinian

Who are the bad guys?

Three groups favor keeping our Third World wage structure and dooming a generation of local island youth to servitude and poverty: the Chamber, HANMI, and the Fitial administration. We have two groups that have not formally stated their position, the TaoTao Tano and the 16th Legislature.

The Saipan Chamber of Commerce opposes raising the minimum wage here. HANMI supports keeping a status quo on wages in the NMI and sent their president to DC to lobby against raising the wages of local Chamorro and Carolinian workers of our islands. Any American company involved in this should be exposed.

The Fitial administration has publicly stated they are in favor of artificially depressing wages. This policy will guarantee another generation of local islanders working for slave wages while their big business associates flourish. The Fitial administration includes the mainland lawyers circulating anti-federalization propaganda, which has been thoroughly rebuked by many credible sources, including the U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Senate, Federal Ombudsman Jim Benedetto, NMI Rep. Tina Sablan, and many others. The Governor, his attorney Howard Willens, free Commonwealth legal consultant to our dysfunctional DOL, Deanne Siemer, and Fitial's niece, Cinta Kaipat, are involved with a campaign of disinformation that aims to protect big businesses to the determent of our local citizens. This entire situation seems be beyond the look of impropriety.

I don't know Taotao Tano's official position on restricting the opportunities available to the next generation of our local island youth. Do the 130 members of the TTT rally support raising the minimum wage here for locals or do you support Governor Fitial and his mainland lawyers' freeze on our Third World wage structure? Please advise, but please spare me any propaganda written by Fitial's or Jack Abramoff's friends. Local residents here deserve to know how the 16th Legislature stands on the minimum wage issue. Do you stand with Fitial, the Chamber, and HANMI, or do you represent and support the local indigenous crusade to elevate their wages and standard of living?

I did challenge the 15th Legislature and have called previous congresspersons here spineless because they were afraid to stand up against big business, but this Legislature has many new faces that may inspire courage, perhaps enough to protect the future of our local young people. I would like to hear the official position of our NMI Legislature regarding the minimum wage issue. Does the 16th Legislature stand with our local citizens in economic emergency or with big business money?

Ron Hodges
Puerto Rico, Saipan

A better life redux

Mr. McCue, "Contract workers want what everyone wants—a better life. No one can fault them for that. Go find it in the Philippines or China!" These are your exact words, isn't it?

So what's the difference between you and these contract workers, Mr. McCue? Perhaps your status, sir. You may be an American citizen and they are not. But you are all just the same—you all want a better life. That's why you are here, too, in the U.S. mainland.

I believe you still know the Golden Rule: "Do unto others what you would like others do unto you." Now let me say what you also told these contract workers, sir: "Go find it in Saipan!" Why don't you ask yourself, sir. why are you here in the U.S. mainland anyway?

Honestly, a lot is owed of these contract workers. Without them, Saipan will not be as well developed as it is right now. How ironic actually. A lot of you want these contract workers to go home to their own country and yet you were so afraid to let go of these contract workers if federalization takes place and they may acquire resident status in the U.S.? Hmmm, really contradictory, huh.

So for those of you who are against these contract workers, go ask yourselves: Who will have the patience to do the jobs that these contract workers are doing? Isn't it the main reason why you hired them in the first place? Right now, they are training the locals to do their jobs. In the first place, you should have done it long time ago.

I hope you all treat each and everyone fairly and rightly no matter whether they are local or contract worker. Why? Because if you treat everyone fair and right, even if contract workers attain a resident status in the U.S., they would rather stay on Saipan and work well with you. Because if not, no matter how you need them badly (whether it be local or contract worker), and no matter how you want them to stay on Saipan (because they are good and honest workers), they will find a way to leave you and find better job elsewhere. I believe most of these contract workers are hoping and praying that they will be granted resident status in the U.S. because of how they are being treated.

Lyn Narido
Houston, Texas

The hard, unspoken, real truth

I welcome Mr. O'Harnett and everyone's views on the federalization/contract workers rights discussion. I would ask all to be civil. I did not and have not attacked or degraded anyone—and will not use insulting terms such as dismissive, spewed, tripe, unsophisticated regressive bent, or call someone ignorant three time but then say it's not an insult. My one time (free use?) use of the word "ignorant" had to do with Paul Harsany's obviously incorrect statement: "Your right to independence and self-rule ended the day the first resort went up." Those three things had nothing to do with each other, as you pointed out with a short history of the CNMI. You point out why I am correct and then call me ignorant? As we move forward, you say it is the contract workers' and citizens' every right to seek redress of grievances—and I would agree.

Getting a green card is not a grievance, however. In order to be a grievance someone or something had to promise and/or agree to a set of circumstances and then renege on them. That did not happen. The opposite happened—the contract workers agreed to a set of circumstances and now they want that agreement to be null and void. The citizens of the CNMI have the grievance. If a contract worker is not paid, or abused, or has any other true violation of the contract, then by all means they have a right to rectify the wrong, and all citizens of the CNMI have the obligation to assist in the process. If a contract worker breaks his or her own contract then the CNMI has the right to deport them.

You then attempt to bolster your view with the quote "that all men are created equal." I agree with this as it is viewed today—but you use the full text as it was written then, when slaves were held, and legally so. Obviously, I hope you would not agree that all men except for slaves and women are equal, but that's what the writers intended when they said that. Your quote is non-sequitur.

Yes, politics is an ever-changing river, sometimes slow and sometimes not so slow. You talk about the Constitution and the 27 times its been changed (in 230 plus years). I guess by your example the river changes slowly. I agree that people have human rights and human dignity. Your call for a righteous change is your view and I respect that. It may be righteous (your view) to some and very debilitating and harmful to others. One of those rights and dignities is not permanent residence, a green card, or the right to overstay, however. Do I and others that disapprove of the contract workers' attempts to gain a green card care for the welfare of the those same people? Without hesitation, YES. The same reason people from all over the globe want to come to the USA is the same reason the contract workers are fighting for—the country and life they came from is/was/will be filled with poverty, hardship and misery by and large. That is the true reason contract workers want to stay in the CNMI and fight. The hard, unspoken, real truth here is that nearly no contract worker wants to go back to the place they came from.

William McCue
Wellington, FL

Kudos to municipal council

Much has been said about the role of the Municipal Council and the lack of productivity throughout the past few months. I am glad to see and read that they are working towards improvements within the community. RB Camacho, Marian Tudela, and the rest of the team down there at the old hall by the post office are really pushing forth with efforts and projects to revitalize the villages and provide for a safe and sound environment.

Kudos to them all. We are well on our way to being at peace. This is exactly what we need. This is exactly what I am talking about when I say that it is not just the Governor's or the Legislature's job. We have many branches of the government that, if unified and if networking is practiced, we can really soar and save our CNMI. It does not take a rocket scientist, it does not always take money... sometimes all we need is to be innovative and do things "old school" to achieve our goal. Kudos again to the Municipal Council for working to take some of the load off the others.

Now, who is next? Come on, CNMI we can do this. We can conquer this depression. We can row ourselves quickly out and away from this storm if we do it together.

Rose T. Ada-Hocog
via e-mail

Business

Oil prices up on possible OPEC cut

By PABLO GORONDI
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

Oil prices rose slightly Monday, gaining after further hints that OPEC may cut production if global supplies continue to rise.

The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries has trimmed its forecasts for demand this year by 100,000 barrels a day, but it has also hinted it may cut production if global supplies of crude continue to rise, according to Dow Jones Newswires.

Several reports in recent days, though, have suggested that global economic conditions may not be deteriorating as quickly as feared. The U.S. Federal Reserve said Friday that industrial production in the world's largest economy rose last month in line with expectations. On the other hand, the Energy Department, the International Energy Agency and now OPEC have all cut demand forecasts.

OPEC is scheduled to meet March 5 in Vienna to review its production policy.

Light, sweet crude for March delivery rose 40 cents to $95.90 a barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange by midday in Europe.

Trading volumes on Monday were thinner than usual due to the President's Day holiday in the United States and the start in London of the International Petroleum Week, a reputed oil industry conference.

The Nymex crude contract rose 4 cents Friday to settle at $95.50 a barrel after alternating frequently between positive and negative territory. Oil prices have risen more than $8 in little more than a week.

On Sunday, Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez soothed American motorists, saying that Venezuela is not preparing to cut off oil shipments to the United States.

The socialist leader rattled oil markets when he threatened a week ago to halt shipments to the United States in retaliation for Exxon Mobil Corp.'s success in persuading courts in the U.S. and Europe to freeze Venezuelan assets.

Beef industry responds to secret video footage

DENVER (AP)—Despite a secretly taped video showing workers at a Southern California slaughterhouse abusing sick or crippled animals, nearly all cattle bound for American dinner tables are treated humanely, a cattle industry spokesman said Monday.

The undercover video taken at the Westland/Hallmark Meat Co. of Chino, Calif., by the Humane Society of the United States shows workers shocking, kicking and shoving debilitated cattle with forklifts, and has led to the largest recall of beef in U.S. history.

Bo Reagan, vice president of research for the Colorado-based National Cattleman's Beef Association, said the videotaped incident was not indicative of how most slaughterhouses operate.

"The welfare of our animals —that's the heart and soul of our operations," Reagan said.

U.S. Department of Agriculture guidelines mandate that an inspector must review sick or injured animals, called "downer" cattle, before they can be slaughtered, and that the 1958 Humane Slaughter Act sets strict rules for the humane treatment of animals.

"What happened in this case was that there were some animals that were harvested out of compliance," he said.

The video prompted the recall of 143 million pounds of the company's beef. Federal regulations call for keeping downed cattle out of the food supply because they may pose a higher risk of contamination from E. coli, salmonella or mad cow disease since they typically wallow in feces and their immune systems are often weak.

AP

A worker throws a piece of meat among cattle carcass scraps dropped into a truck at the Hallmark Meat Packing slaughterhouse in Chino, Calif. in this Jan. 30, 2008 file photo.

A pedestrian, along with a dog, watches an electric market board in Tokyo, Monday, Feb.18, 2008. The benchmark Nikkei 225 stock index added 174.72 points, to end the morning session at 13,797.28 points on the Tokyo Stock Exchange.

AP

Wall Street faces fury over subprimes

BOSTON (AP)—Regulators are trying to punish Wall Street for mortgage finance practices that expanded home ownership and spread risk among a host of new players—but also may have duped borrowers and investors who supplied cash to fuel a housing boom that's turned bust.

A handful of state securities regulators and a couple foreclosure-blighted cities have fired the opening shots with lawsuits trying to prove that investment banks and big lenders are guilty of more than just bad business decisions and failing to foresee looming mortgage troubles. Some regulators say greed and fraud underlie much of the subprime mortgage mess that has spread across the broader housing market, triggering a spike in foreclosures.

Airlines facing tough times amid slowdown

SINGAPORE (AP)—Improved efficiency has helped airlines better prepare for a possible global economic slowdown compared to the last major recession, but expensive fuel continues to hurt bottom lines, an airline industry group said Monday.

The airlines "are better prepared because we have a much more efficient system overall," the International Air Transport Association's chief executive, Giovanni Bisignani, said on the sidelines of the Aviation Leadership Summit in Singapore.

"Simplifying businesses brings into the industry $6 billion in savings. We've been able to develop new routes and (improve) fuel efficiency," Bisignani said.

Since 2001, the industry has seen labor productivity rise 64 percent, while nonfuel unit costs have dropped 16 percent and sales and marketing costs have decreased by 25 percent, according to the association.

Bisignani said, however, it is still too early to forecast the impact on airlines' revenues that a U.S. or global slowdown would have and warned that tough times were ahead.

"The revenue cycle peaked in 2006 and the negative impact of the credit crunch is still being calculated. Airlines may be out of intensive care but the industry is still sick," he said earlier in an opening speech. The association expects air traffic growth to slow from 5.9 percent in 2007 to 4 percent this year.

Product safety leader warns toy industry

NEW YORK (AP)—The acting chairwoman of the Consumer Product Safety Commission lashed out Monday at the toy industry for a lack of safety controls that led to a string of highly publicized recalls, and she warned that the industry is obligated to regulate itself.

"I will not tolerate this industry ... not complying with our regulations," Nancy Nord said in an address at the annual American International Toy Fair expo, whose four-day run ends Wednesday.

Nord said the federal agency, under attack for not acting quickly enough to eliminate hazardous products from store shelves, is adding staff and working more closely with customs officials to stop suspect imports. But she noted that "we all need to take responsibility" to make toys safer, and she said she was "very angry" about recalls involving lead paint because they showed a breakdown in quality control.

STOCK Portfolio

ASIAN MARKETS

AUSTRALIA 5,688.800 Up 54.800 (+0.97%)	HONG KONG 24,276.36 Up 517.11 (+2.18%)
JAKARTA 2,705.6699 Up 20.968 (+0.78%)	TOKYO 13,791.68 Up 156.28 (+1.15%)
K. LUMPUR 1,427.19 Down 8.91 (-0.62%)	MANILA 3,190.67 Up 27.42 (+0.87%)
SINGAPORE 3,124.17 Up 40.83 (+1.32%)	SEOUL 1,715.19 Up 18.95 (+1.12%)
BANGKOK 607.25 Up 11.43 (+1.92%)	

LEADING INDICATORS

DOW 12,348.21 -28.77

NASDAQ 2,321.80 -10.74

S&P 1,349.99 +1.13

MONEY MARKET

Australian Dollar	1.0875
British Pound	0.513
Canadian Dollar	1.0072
Chinese Renmbi	7.154
Euro	0.682
Hong Kong Dollar	7.7999
Indian Rupee	39.821
Indonesian Rupiah	9145
Japanese Yen	108.105
Malaysian Ringgit	3.2203
New Zealand Dollar	1.2531
Philippine Peso	40.615
Singapore Dollar	1.4114
South Korean Won	944
Swiss Franc	1.1018
Taiwan Dollar	31.662
Thailand Baht	31.715

In U.S. dollar terms

Source: Associated Press

Nation

Amtrak to step up security measures

WASHINGTON (AP)—Amtrak will start randomly screening passengers' carry-on bags this week in a new security push that includes officers with automatic weapons and bomb-sniffing dogs patrolling platforms and trains.

The initiative, to be announced by the railroad on Tuesday, is a significant shift for Amtrak. Unlike the airlines, it has had relatively little visible increase in security since the 2001 terrorist attacks, a distinction that has enabled it to attract passengers eager to avoid airport hassles.

Amtrak officials insist their new procedures won't hold up the flow of passengers.

"On-time performance is a key element of Amtrak service. We are fully mindful of that. This is not about train delays," Bill Rooney, the railroad's vice president for security strategy and special operations, told The Associated Press.

Nor will the moves require passengers to arrive at stations far in advance, officials said. Passengers who are selected randomly for the screening will be delayed no more than a couple of minutes, Amtrak chief executive Alex Kummant said.

"We're very conscious of the fact that you're in an environment where commuters have minutes to go from train to train," he said.

Concern about Amtrak security has been mounting since the 2004 bombings of commuter trains in Madrid that killed 191 people. Trains also have been bombed in London, where 52 people were killed in a series of blasts in 2005, most of them on subway trains, and in Mumbai, India, where 200 people were killed in 2006 on commuter trains. Russia also has had several bombings on subway, commuter and long-distance trains.

The new procedures draw heavily on measures being used in the New York City subways, Rooney said. That model has been upheld in court challenges, he noted.

Amtrak plans to roll out the new "mobile security teams" first on the Northeast Corridor between Washington and Boston, the railroad's most heavily used route, before expanding them to the rest of the country.

The teams will show up unannounced at stations and set up baggage screening areas in front of boarding gates. Officers will randomly pull people out of line and wipe their bags with a special swab that is then put through a machine that detects explosives. If the machine detects anything, officers will open the bag for visual inspection.

Aging Air Force wants big bucks upgrade

WASHINGTON (AP)—Air Force officials are warning that unless their budget is increased dramatically, and soon, the military's high-flying branch won't dominate the skies as it has for decades.

After more than six years of war in Afghanistan and Iraq, the Air Force's aging jet fighters, bombers, cargo aircraft and gunships are at the breaking point, they say, and expensive, ultramodern replacements are needed fast.

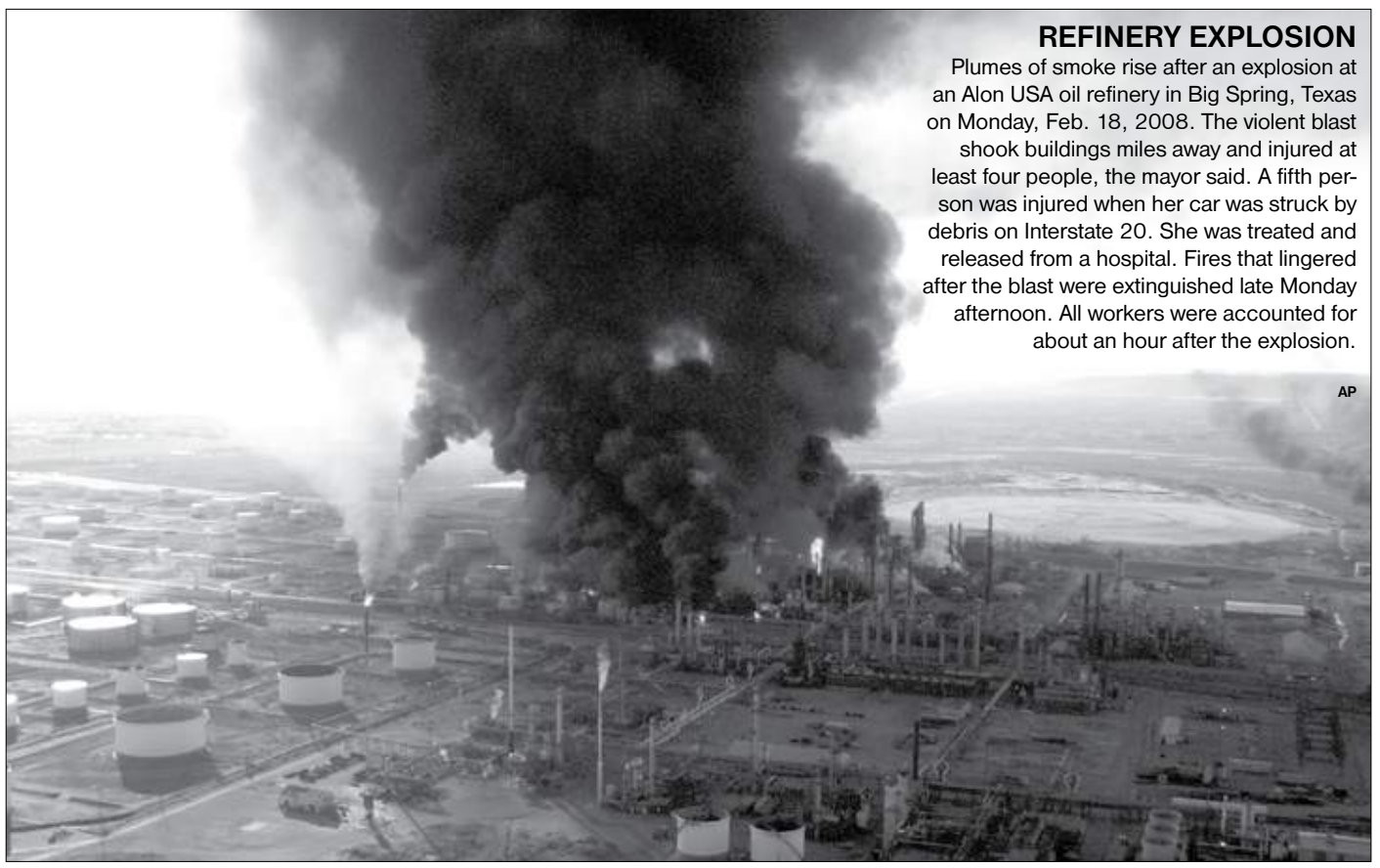
"What we've done is put the requirement on the table that says, 'If we're going to do the missions you're going to ask us to do, it will require this kind of investment,'" Maj. Gen. Paul Selva, the Air Force's director of strategic planning, said in an interview with The Associated Press.

"Failing that, we take what is already a geriatric Air Force," Selva said, "and we drive it for another 20 years into an area of uncertainty."

An extra $20 billion each year over the next five - beginning with an Air Force budget of about $137 billion in 2009 instead of the $117 billion proposed by the Bush administration - would solve that problem, according to Selva and other senior Air Force officers.

Yet the prospects for huge infusions of cash seem dim. Congress is expected to boost the 2009 budget, but not to the level urged by the Air Force. In the years that follow, a possible recession, a rising federal deficit and a distaste for higher taxes all portend a decline in defense spending regardless of which party wins the White House in November.

"The Air Force is going to be confronting a major procurement crisis because it can't buy all the things that it absolutely needs," said Dov Zakheim, a former Pentagon comptroller. "It's going to force us to rethink, yet again, what is the strategy we want? What can we give up?"



REFINERY EXPLOSION
Plumes of smoke rise after an explosion at an Alon USA oil refinery in Big Spring, Texas on Monday, Feb. 18, 2008. The violent blast shook buildings miles away and injured at least four people, the mayor said. A fifth person was injured when her car was struck by debris on Interstate 20. She was treated and released from a hospital. Fires that lingered after the blast were extinguished late Monday afternoon. All workers were accounted for about an hour after the explosion.

AP

Biden, Bond seek probe of MRAP vehicle delay

WASHINGTON (AP)—Two senators are urging the Pentagon to investigate a Marine Corps report that bureaucrats refused an urgent request from battlefield commanders in 2005 for blast-resistant vehicles. "We need an official investigation to figure out why this happened and to make sure it never happens again," said Sen. Joseph Biden Jr., D-Del.

Biden, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, has been a longtime advocate of building and deploying more of the vehicles, called MRAPs.

Sen. Kit Bond, R-Mo., said the government shouldn't have to "explain to the families of American troops that a cost effective solution capable of saving lives was not deployed because of bureaucratic delays or insufficient funds."

The Associated Press first reported Friday that hundreds of U.S. Marines have been killed or injured by roadside bombs in Iraq because Marine Corps officials refused the request of the commanders. Both senators issued their statements Sunday.

"This is a stark warning that the military brass back home is not acting on needs of our war fighters on the front lines," Biden said. "We must be as fast and flexible as the enemy. We need an official investigation to figure out why this happened and to make sure it never happens again."

Bond said, "With our troops serving on the front lines in the war on terror, this gross mismanagement of our military's acquisition process is inexcusable. The military needs to take a hard look" at the report that details "the bureaucratic delays of lifesaving equipment to our troops in the field."

ACROSS THE NATION

Illinois' new gun law under scrutiny

CHICAGO (AP)—Illinois lawmakers moved swiftly after last year's massacre at Virginia Tech to make it harder for anyone with a history of mental illness to buy guns, fortifying what were already some of the nation's toughest weapons laws. But the new measure does not take effect until June. And whether it would have prevented last week's bloodbath at Northern Illinois University is far from clear. Steven Kazmierczak, the 27-year-old grad student who bought an arsenal of guns in recent months and used them to kill five people and commit suicide, had been on medication and was said to have spent time in a psychiatric center as a teen in the late 1990s.

Repairs start in twister-damaged South

PRATTVILLE, Ala. (AP)—Homeowners, utility crews and others worked Monday to clear away wreckage and restore services after the latest round of winter tornadoes to smash through the South. Alabama Gov. Bob Riley toured part of Prattville and said he was impressed by the community's response to the twister that struck the town. At least 50 people were injured, and about 200 homes and 40 businesses were damaged in the Prattville area, according to the National Weather Service. No deaths were reported. Two people who were critically injured were upgraded to serious on Monday, said Todd Stacy, a spokesman for the governor. At least 11,000 homes and businesses in Prattville lacked power after the storm.

Hospital: Graham continues to improve

ASHEVILLE, N.C. (AP)—Evangelist Billy Graham may be released from a hospital within a few days after undergoing surgery to update a shunt that controls excess fluid to his brain, officials said Monday. The 89-year-old Southern Baptist minister remains in fair condition at Asheville's Mission Hospital, spokeswoman Merrell Gregory said. She said he did well over the weekend, continuing to increase his walking regimen and working with physical therapists to build his strength. Graham underwent the elective surgery Feb. 13 to replace a shunt first installed in 2000. Doctors determined the old shunt wasn't adequately controlling the brain fluid.

Reagan to stay second night at hospital

SANTA MONICA, Calif. (AP)—Former first lady Nancy Reagan was expected to spend a second night at a hospital as a precaution after a falling down in her Bel-Air home, her spokeswoman said Monday. Reagan, 86, was taken to St. John's Health Center, where doctors determined she did not break a hip as feared when she fell early Sunday, her spokeswoman Joanne Drake said. She underwent more tests on Monday. "I am pleased to report that doctors have concluded their tests, all results are good and they intend to release Mrs. Reagan from the hospital tomorrow," Drake said in a statement Monday night.

Obama says borrowed lines not a big deal

NILES, Ohio (AP)—Sen. Barack Obama said Monday that he doesn't think it's a big deal that he borrowed lines from his friend Massachusetts Gov. Deval Patrick, although he probably should have given him credit.

Patrick said during his gubernatorial campaign a year and a half ago that words matter, like "I have a dream" and "all men are created equal."

Obama used the same lines Saturday night in Wisconsin. Obama said that Patrick suggested he use the lines to respond to Hillary Rodham Clinton's suggestion that Obama is more of a talker than a doer.

Clinton spokesman Howard Wolfson accused Obama of plagiarizing Patrick, and that's particularly troubling since Obama's appeal is based in large part on his rhetorical skills.

"It raises questions about the premise of his candidacy," Wolfson told reporters in a conference call.

Obama, D-Ill., says that's going too far.

"Now hold on a second. Let's see - I've written two books, wrote most of my speeches," Obama told reporters at a news conference after touring a titanium plant.

"I'm happy to give Deval credit, as I give credit to a lot people for spurring all kinds of ideas," he said. "But I think that it is fair to say that everything that we've been doing in generating excitement and the interest that people have in the election is based on the core belief in me that we need change in America."

Asked whether he wished he would have given him credit given the criticism he's facing, Obama responded: "I was on the stump, and he had suggested that we use these lines. I thought they were good lines. I'm sure I should have - didn't this time."

"I really don't think this is too big of a deal," he said. He said he's noticed Clinton using his phrases sometimes, like "it's time to turn the page" and "fired up, ready to go."

Asia

140 Afghans killed in two days of bombings

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan (AP)—A suicide car bomber killed 38 Afghans at a crowded market Monday, pushing the death toll from two days of militant bombings to about 140.

The marketplace blast, which targeted a Canadian army convoy, came a day after the country's deadliest insurgent attack since a U.S. invasion defeated the Taliban regime in late 2001. The toll from that bombing in a crowd watching a dog fight rose to more than 100.

The back-to-back blasts in the southern province of Kandahar could be a sign insurgents are now willing to risk high civilian casualties while attacking security forces. Though their attacks occasionally have killed dozens, militants in Afghanistan have generally sought to avoid targeting civilians, unlike insurgents in Iraq's war.

"The attacks show that the enemies of Afghanistan are changing their tactics. Now they are not thinking about civilians at all," said Nasrullah Stanikzai, a professor of political science at Kabul University.

"They wanted to cause such big casualties in these attacks to weaken the morale of the government and the international community, to show the world the Afghan government is too weak to prevent them," he said.

The Taliban denied it carried out Sunday's attack, but immediately claimed responsibility for the market bombing, which took place in the town of Spin Boldak about 100 yards from the border with Pakistan.

Pakistan opposition takes lead

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan (AP)—Pakistan opposition parties took commanding leads in unofficial returns early Tuesday in Parliamentary elections, heading toward a victory that could challenge President Pervez Musharraf's rule eight years after seizing power in a military coup.

Monday's balloting was aimed at bolstering democracy and ending a year-long political crisis, but fear and apathy kept millions of voters at home.

The government confirmed 24 election-related deaths over the past 36 hours. But the country was spared the type of Islamic militant violence that scarred the campaign - most notably the assassination of the charismatic opposition leader, Benazir Bhutto.

State-run television early Tuesday gave the two main opposition parties strong leads in early unofficial tallies, a trend conceded by the president's Pakistan Muslim League-Q party. Final official results were not expected before Wednesday.

"As far as we are concerned, we will be willing to sit on opposition benches if final results prove that we have lost. This is the trend," party spokesman Tariq Azeem said.

Bali bomber's body may be in RP

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—The Philippine military began DNA tests Tuesday to determine if remains found in a jungle grave are of an elusive terror suspect in the 2002 Bali bombings who authorities believe was killed in a clash with U.S.-backed troops.

A captured militant from the al-Qaida-linked Abu Sayyaf group led government troops Monday to a grave in the southernmost province of Tawi Tawi that contained a cadaver bearing gunshot wounds and closely resembling Ammar Usman—widely known as Dulmatin, officials said.

"We are conducting DNA test to confirm if it's really his body," said marine commandant Maj. Gen. Benjamin Dolorfino.

A master bomb-maker of the Indonesia-based Jemaah Islamiyah group, Dulmatin has been accused of helping mastermind the 2002 nightclub bombings in the Indonesian resort of Bali that killed 202 people in Asia's worst terrorist attack.

'GMA wanted NBN project OK'd despite bribery allegation'

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—A witness told a Philippine Senate inquiry Monday that President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo ignored an economic adviser's report that he had been offered a large bribe in a telecommunications deal and ordered him to get the project approved anyway.

Former Socio-economic Planning Secretary Romulo Neri was so upset with Arroyo's decision that he considered resigning after being ordered to seek approval of the US$330 million (€225 million) government broadband contract, a former consultant for the project, Rodolfo Lozada Jr., testified.

Disappointed with corruption scandals hounding Arroyo's government, Neri also called the president "evil" during a lecture on the economy to opposition politicians in December, Lozada said.

Neri, who now heads the government's commission on higher education, denied in a news conference that Arroyo ordered him to have the deal approved. He also told The Associated Press in an interview that he could not remember calling Arroyo "evil."

Neri told Arroyo he declined a 200 million-peso (US$5 million; €3.4 million) bribe last year from then-Commission on Elections Chairman Benjamin Abalos, who was pushing for the deal to be approved, Lozada said.

ASIAN BRIEFS

24 killed in China iron mine explosion

BEIJING (AP)—An explosion at an illegal mine disguised as a wild boar farm killed 24 people, a Chinese government news agency reported Tuesday. The explosion in Wu'an City in the northern Hebei Province happened on Sunday, but the local government did not receive reports of it until a day later, the official Xinhua News Agency said. More than 30 people were initially trapped after the explosion, the agency reported. A rescue operation lasted until just after midnight on Tuesday, according to the news agency. Five of the survivors were injured and were in stable condition at a hospital, Xinhua said.

Sri Lanka: Rebel bunkers captured

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka (AP)—Sri Lankan soldiers captured a line of strategic rebel bunkers after a battle Monday that killed 10 rebels and one soldier, the military said. Backed by mortar and artillery fire, army troops captured a 650-yard line of bunkers in northern Mannar district following a two-hour battle that also injured four soldiers, said Brig. Udaya Nanayakkara, the military's spokesman. Though small, the stretch will help the military in its push to take rebel-held territories in Mannar district, Nanayakkara said. Rebel spokesman Rasiah Ilanthirayan did not answer calls seeking comment.

US: N. Korea must declare nuclear plans

BEIJING (AP)—A U.S. nuclear envoy said Monday that North Korea needs to make a proper declaration of its nuclear programs to revive a disarmament process that has stalled since the end of last year. North Korea was supposed to declare its nuclear programs by the end of 2007 to the five other countries involved in the talks. Pyongyang said it produced a list in November, but Washington has maintained that the information was inadequate. "We're a little stuck on the need for a complete and correct declaration," U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill told reporters. The declaration was part of an October deal that also called for North Korea to disable its nuclear facilities in exchange for energy aid and political concessions, including removal from the U.S. terrorism blacklist.

World

AP

Police officers stand in line during a demonstration against Kosovo's independence as they block Kosovar Serbs from approaching the bridge over the River Ibar which divides Serbs and Albanians in the ethnically divided town of Kosovska Mitrovica, Kosovo, Monday, Feb. 18, 2008.

Superpower divide over Kosovo widens

BRUSSELS, Belgium (AP)—The U.S. and the European Union's biggest powers quickly recognized Kosovo as an independent nation Monday, widening a split with Russia, China and some EU members strongly opposed to letting the territory break away from Serbia.

A day after Kosovo declared independence, ethnic Serbs in the north angrily denounced the United States and urged Russia to help Serbia hold on to the territory that Serbs consider the birthplace of their civilization.

Protesters also marched in Serbia's capital, and that nation recalled its ambassador to the U.S. to protest American recognition for an independent Kosovo.

Despite clamoring of Serbs to retake Kosovo, Serbia's government has ruled out a military response.

But the dispute is likely to worsen already strained relations between the West and Russia, which is a traditional ally of Serbia and seeks to restore its influence in former Soviet bloc states. The Kremlin could become less likely to help in international efforts important to the U.S. and its allies, such as pressuring Iran to rein in its nuclear program.

UN Council mulls Kosovo's future

UNITED NATIONS (AP)—Serbia promised not to resort to violence Monday but ordered ambassadors to return home as it argued against an independent Kosovo. The European nation also implored the U.N. Security Council to intervene.

"This arbitrary decision represents a precedent which will cause irreparable damage to the international order," Serbian President Boris Tadic said in the second day of an emergency session of the Security Council.

The council's meeting ended after 2 1/2 hours without agreement on a resolution or joint statement regarding Sunday's declaration of independence by Kosovo's ethnic Albanian majority.

Serbia pulled its diplomats from the United States and other countries recognizing what Foreign Minister Vuk Jeremic called "this illegal act of secession." Serbia also vowed to block Kosovo from gaining diplomatic recognition and membership in international organizations, and filed legal charges against Kosovo's leadership.

Rockets kill 5 near Baghdad airport

BAGHDAD (AP)—Rockets slammed into an Iraqi housing complex near the Baghdad international airport and a nearby U.S. military base on Monday, killing at least five people and wounding 16, including two U.S. soldiers, officials said.

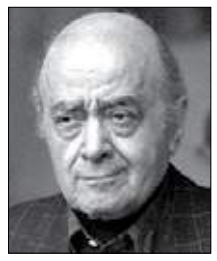
American troops acting on strong evidence arrested six Iraqi suspects in the vicinity of the apparent launching sites, a military official said.

The brazen attack followed a weekend in which U.S. and Iraqi officials touted the security gains of a year-old operation in Baghdad that included an influx of some 30,000 extra American troops. Rocket and mortar attacks were once a daily occurrence but have tapered off with a general decline in violence in the capital.

Twelve 107 mm rockets fell in and around the airport and the nearby Camp Victory, the main U.S. military base on the western outskirts of Baghdad, the U.S. military official said, speaking on anonymity of anonymity ahead of the official release of the information.

Diana: Spotlight on Mohamed Al Fayed

LONDON (AP)—The man who claims Princess Diana and his son were killed in a wide-ranging conspiracy led by Britain's royal family said Monday that dark forces within the country's establishment would not accept a marriage between a princess and a Muslim.



Al Fayed

Mohamed Al Fayed testified Monday at a coroner's inquest that the cast of conspirators involved in the 1997 deaths of Diana and Dodi Fayed included Prince Philip, Prince Charles, former Prime Minister Tony Blair and Diana's sister, Sarah McCorquodale.

He also accused as being part of the alleged plot and cover-up Diana's brother-in-law Robert Fellowes; two former chiefs of London police; driver Henri Paul; the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency; Diana's attorney, the late Lord Mishcon; two French toxicologists; members of the French medical service; and three bodyguards he once employed.

Lengthy investigations by French and British police concluded that the Aug. 31, 1997 crash was an accident, and that driver Henri Paul was drunk and speeding.

Mauritania frees 8 after embassy attack

NOUAKCHOTT, Mauritania (AP)—Mauritanian authorities have released all eight people who had been detained after an attack on the Israeli Embassy earlier this month for lack of evidence, officials said Monday.

Seven of the detainees, including two Tunisian citizens, were held for 10 days and interrogated before being released on Monday, Judge Ould Moustapha said. The eighth was released last week shortly after his arrest, also because there was not enough proof to hold him.

Moustapha gave no other details.

Campus Life

Students fight back against gossip site

By JUSTIN POPE
AP EDUCATION WRITER

The Cornell University junior was in his dorm between classes when the text message came in from a friend. Check out JuicyCampus.com, it said.

The student found his name on the Web site beside a rambling, filthy passage about his sexual exploits, posted by an anonymous student on campus. The young man could only hope the commentary was so ridiculous nobody would believe it.

"I thought, 'Is this going to affect my job employment? Is this going to make people on campus look at me? Are people going to talk about me behind my back?" said the student, who asked not to be identified. He also wondered about his 11-year-old sister, who is spending more time on th e Internet. "What if she Googles me? What will she think about her big brother?" he said.

JuicyCampus' endless threads of anonymous innuendo have been a popular Web destination on the seven college campuses where the site launched last fall, including Duke, UCLA and Loyola Marymount. It recently expanded to 50 more, and many of the postings show they've been viewed hundreds and even thousands of times.

But JuicyCampus has proved so poisonous there are signs of a backlash.

In campus debates over Internet freedom, students normally take the side of openness and access. This time, however, student leaders, newspaper editorials and posters on the site are fighting back—with some even asking administrators to ban JuicyCampus. It's a kind of plea to save the students, or at least their reputations, from themselves.

"It is an expression from our student body that we don't want this junk in our community," said Andy Canales, leader of the student government at Pepperdine, which recently voted 23-5 to ask for a ban.

The vote came after a long and emotional debate on the limits of free speech, and was swayed by stories from students such as Haley Frazier, a junior residential adviser. She had recently come across a teary transfer student who had been humiliated on the site barely a week after arriving on campus.

"I can't imagine the disgust she must have for Pepperdine if that's what (students) say," Frazier said.

College administrators say they are appalled by the site but have no control over it since students can see it outside the campus computer network. They say all they can do is urge students not to post items or troll for malicious gossip—and hope that in the process they learn about how to get along.

That tactic may be having an effect.

At a number of campuses where JuicyCampus was a hot topic even just a few weeks ago, students and administrators say use and complaints have tapered off sharply. That's hard to confirm; Internet tracker comScore Inc. says the site's visitor numbers are too low to be counted by its system.

But more and more postings criticize the site, with comments like, "let's not ruin each other's lives," and, "If you can't personalize any of the stuff you read or write here, imagine it happening to your sister or your best friend."

"People have gotten just extremely sick of hearing all this stuff," said Rachelle Palisoc, a freshman at Loyola Marymount in California, who joined a Facebook group called "Ban Juicycampus!!!!" that has about 850 members.

Free to use and supported by advertising, JuicyCampus is a simple conduit urging users to post gossip and promising them total anonymity. There are threads on campus hook-ups, who's popular and who's overweight.

"Top ten freshman sluts" reads one typical thread, and "The Jews ruin this school" another. Homophobia is common. Many postings combine the cruelty of a middle school playground, the tight social dynamics of a college campus and the alarming global reach of the Internet.

JuicyCampus pledges that it blocks its discussion boards from being indexed by search sites like Google, and that appears to be true.

"College students are clever and fun-loving, and we wanted to create a place where they could share their stories," said Matt Ivester, the site's founder, who agreed to answer questions by e-mail.

"Like anything that is even remotely controversial, there are always people who demand censorship," he said in response to calls he has rejected—including one from his alma mater, Duke—for him to shut down the site. "However, we believe that JuicyCampus can have a really positive impact on college campuses, as a place for both entertainment and free expression. Frankly, we're surprised that any college administration would be against the free exchange of ideas."

Duke's vice president for student affairs, Larry Moneta, said the school asked Ivester to consider "moderating the venom or at least moderating the opportunity for venom." However, "my sense is that's not that person's interest," Moneta said.

Under U.S. law, sites like JuicyCampus generally bear no responsibility for what their users post, said George Washington University law professor Daniel Solove, author of the recent book "The Future of Reputation: Gossip, Rumor, and Privacy on the Internet."

But Solove believes Congress and the courts have gone overboard protecting such sites. It's one thing to protect the owner of a Web site when someone posts a defamatory message unbeknownst to the operator. But Solove says sites like JuicyCampus exist solely to propagate gossip and should be held to a different standard.

In fact, JuicyCampus seems designed to shield its users from the threat of libel claims. The site's privacy page notes that it logs the numeric Internet protocol addresses of its users, but does not associate those addresses with specific posts. That is unlike mainstream social networking sites, which do maintain such detailed logs.

JuicyCampus also goes further by directing posters to free online services that cloak IP addresses. "Just do a quick search on Google and find one you like," JuicyCampus advises.

The site's companion blog reminds users that "our terms and conditions require users to agree not to post anything that is defamatory, libelous, etc." But a few paragraphs later, the blog implies that it will rebuff anything short of a public safety query: "If your school calls upset about some girl being called a slut, we're not handing over access to our server data. If the LAPD calls telling us there is a shooting threat, you better believe we're gonna help them ..."

Fraternity and sorority leaders and student governments are mainly urging students to sap the site of advertisers by turning a blind eye.

"If we don't get on there it will die," said C.J. Slicklen, student government president at Cornell, where students vented at a meeting last week.

The concerns extend beyond hurt feelings. At Loyola Marymount, a now-former student was arrested after allegedly posting a threat of a campus shooting spree on JuicyCampus. And the dangers of social network bullying were highlighted by the recent death of a 13-year-old suburban St. Louis girl who committed suicide after receiving cruel messages on her MySpace page—messages that turned out to be a hoax.

Pepperdine spokesman Jerry Derloshon said the school applauds the student government's reaction, though Pepperdine has not banned the site.

"In the end," he said, "the site's shock value will diminish and it will be revealed for what it is: empty."

Life & Style

AP

Dallas County District Attorney Craig Watkins reads from a document that was found along with other memorabilia in a safe at the county courts building that is connected to the Assassination of President John F. Kennedy, during a press conference in Dallas, Monday Feb. 18, 2008.

JFK assassination docs revealed

By ANABELLE GARAY
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

DALLAS (AP) -- Long-hidden items and documents related to the 1963 assassination of President John F. Kennedy were revealed for the first time Monday, after spending nearly two decades locked inside a courthouse safe.

Dallas County District Attorney Craig Watkins presented the articles at a Presidents' Day news conference while standing next to brown and white file boxes stacked in a pyramid.

The items include a purported transcript between Kennedy assassin Lee Harvey Oswald and Oswald's killer, nightclub owner Jack Ruby; a leather gun holster that held the weapon Ruby used to shoot Oswald; brass knuckles found on Ruby when he was arrested; and a movie contract signed by then-Dallas District Attorney Henry Wade.

Watkins said investigators told him about the contents of the blue, two-door safe shortly after he took office in 2007.

"And every DA up until the new administration decided that they wanted to keep it secret," he said. But he decided "this information was too important to keep secret."

One of the most intriguing items was the typed transcript of an alleged conversation between Oswald and Ruby. The transcript - which hasn't been examined by experts and has already been called farfetched by some - includes talk of killing the president at the behest of the Mafia.

"Now we don't know if this is an actual conversation or not," Watkins said. "But what we do know is that as a result of this find, it will open up the debate as to whether there was a conspiracy to assassinate the president."

Ruby killed Oswald on Nov. 24, 1963, two days after Oswald was arrested in the assassination of President Kennedy. Ruby was convicted and sentenced to death the following year. Ruby won an appeal of his conviction but died of cancer before he was retried.

The two-page transcript resembles one published by the Warren Commission, which investigated Kennedy's assassination and determined Oswald was the lone gunman.

In the report, the FBI concluded that transcript of an alleged conversation between Oswald and Ruby was fake, and that it had been "re-created" for authorities by a now-deceased Dallas attorney who claimed he recognized Oswald in a newspaper photo as the man he saw talking to Ruby.

The transcript unveiled Monday is dated Oct. 4, 1963, and allegedly happened at the Carousel Club, a Dallas nightclub. It begins with a discussion of how the "boys in Chicago" want to "get rid of" U.S. Attorney General Robert Kennedy, JFK's brother.

"There is a way to get rid of him without killing him," Oswald says.

"How's that?" Ruby responds.

"I can shoot his brother," Oswald says.

After a discussion of the logistics of shooting the president, Ruby says the money for the operation's coming from the Mafia.

"Are you with the Mafia?" Oswald asked.

"You're asking too many questions," Ruby responds.

Later, Ruby gives a lengthy warning that Oswald must not get caught or say anything, noting that "if you do talk, then the boys will make me follow you, wherever you go, and kill you."

The Dallas Morning News first reported the transcript and other details of the find in an exclusive story published Sunday.

Gary Mack, curator of the Sixth Floor Museum near where the president was shot, thinks the document displayed Monday could be one of many scripts written for films about the assassination.

"My best guess is somebody found that transcript, reworked it for the movies and Henry Wade wound up with a copy," Mack said.

A 1967 movie production deal signed by Wade, who prosecuted Ruby, was in the safe. It's unclear why the film was never produced, Watkins said.

The contents of the safe were likely Wade's personal files on the Kennedy assassination, which researchers have long-known Wade kept. When he left office in the 1980s, Wade thought the files were taken to his home but they apparently weren't, Mack said.

Staff from the DA's office were nearly finished scanning the scores of typed and handwritten papers and cataloging the items. Recordings and films kept in the safe had not yet been examined. Once the task is completed, Watkins said his office plans to turn over the articles to an organization that will continue making them public.

"We're looking forward to the opportunity to talk with the district attorney ... We would love to have these records," Mack said. "We believe very strongly that these records need to stay here in Dallas."

Neither the Ruby nor Kennedy families had been contacted about the items, Watkins said.

Scientists find 'Devil Toad' fossil

WASHINGTON (AP)—A frog the size of a bowling ball, with heavy armor and teeth, lived among dinosaurs millions of years ago - intimidating enough that scientists who unearthed its fossils dubbed the beast Beelzebufo, or Devil Toad.

But its size—10 pounds and 16 inches long—isn't the only curiosity. Researchers discovered the creature's bones in Madagascar. Yet it seems to be a close relative of normal-sized frogs who today live half a world away in South America, challenging assumptions about ancient geography.

The discovery, led by paleontologist David Krause at New York's Stony Brook University, was published Monday by the journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

"This frog, if it has the same habits as its living relatives in South America, was quite voracious," Krause said. "It's even conceivable that it could have taken down some hatchling dinosaurs."

This undated handout artist rendering provided by Dan Klores Communications shows a Beelzebufo ampinga facing off against the largest known living Malagasy frog, Mantydactylus ampinga. A full -length pencil provide size perspective.
AP

Krause began finding fragments of abnormally large frog bones in Madagascar, off the coast of Africa, in 1993. They dated back to the late Cretaceous period, roughly 70 million years ago, in an area where Krause also was finding dinosaur and crocodile fossils. But only recently did Krause's team assemble enough frog bones to piece together what the creature would have looked like, and weighed.

The largest living frog, the Goliath frog of West Africa, can reach 7 pounds. But Krause teamed with fossil frog experts from University College London to determine that Beelzebufo isn't related to other African frogs.

It seems to be a relative of South American horned frogs, known scientifically as Ceratophrys. Popular as pets, they're sometimes called pacman frogs for their huge mouths.

Like those modern frogs, Beelzebufo had a wide mouth and powerful jaws, plus teeth. Skull bones were extremely thick, with ridges and grooves characteristic of some type of armor or protective shield.

The name comes from the Greek word for devil, Beelzebub, and Latin for toad, bufo (pronounced boo-foe).

The family link raises a paleontology puzzle: Standard theory for how the continents drifted apart show what is now Madagascar would have been long separated by ocean from South America during Beelzebufo's time. And frogs can't survive long in salt water, Krause noted.

He contends the giant frog provides evidence for competing theories that some bridge still connected the land masses that late in time, perhaps via an Antarctica that was much warmer than today.

A song collection, inspired by Lincoln

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP)—Just in time for Presidents Day comes a new album saluting Abe Lincoln. Honest. Chris Vallillo's "Abraham Lincoln in Song" is a collection of mostly Civil War-era songs, including "Dixie" and "Battle Cry of Freedom."

The target audience? Certainly not the Britney Spears crowd.

"Lovers of acoustic music, history buffs and especially the educational audience," will enjoy the album, said Vallillo, a singer-songwriter from Macomb, Ill., who has studied Lincoln's life and Illinois folk traditions.

This album probably won't shoot to the top of the Billboard Hot 100 or dominate radio play.

But Mark Summers, a history professor at the University of Kentucky in Lincoln's native state, said the project can educate as well as entertain.

"Music shows you a good slice of the time period, tells you about sentimentality and the emotions at the time. I'd like to have it for my classes," he said.

The album of mostly acoustic ballads—released on Feb. 12, Lincoln's birthday—grew out of a one-man show in which Vallillo used period music to illustrate Honest Abe's era.

"Battle Cry of Freedom," written by George F. Root, was inspired by Lincoln's call for Union volunteers in 1862. "Hard Times Come Again No More" is by Stephen Foster. There are additional songs about Lincoln's funeral train, a runaway slave and tunes said to be liked by Lincoln. "Aura Lee," written in the 1860s, is the melody for Elvis Presley's "Love Me Tender."

"This should be of interest to anyone who loves Lincoln," said Vallillo, 53.

"Dixie," though popularly associated with the South, was written by a Northerner and was reportedly Lincoln's favorite song.

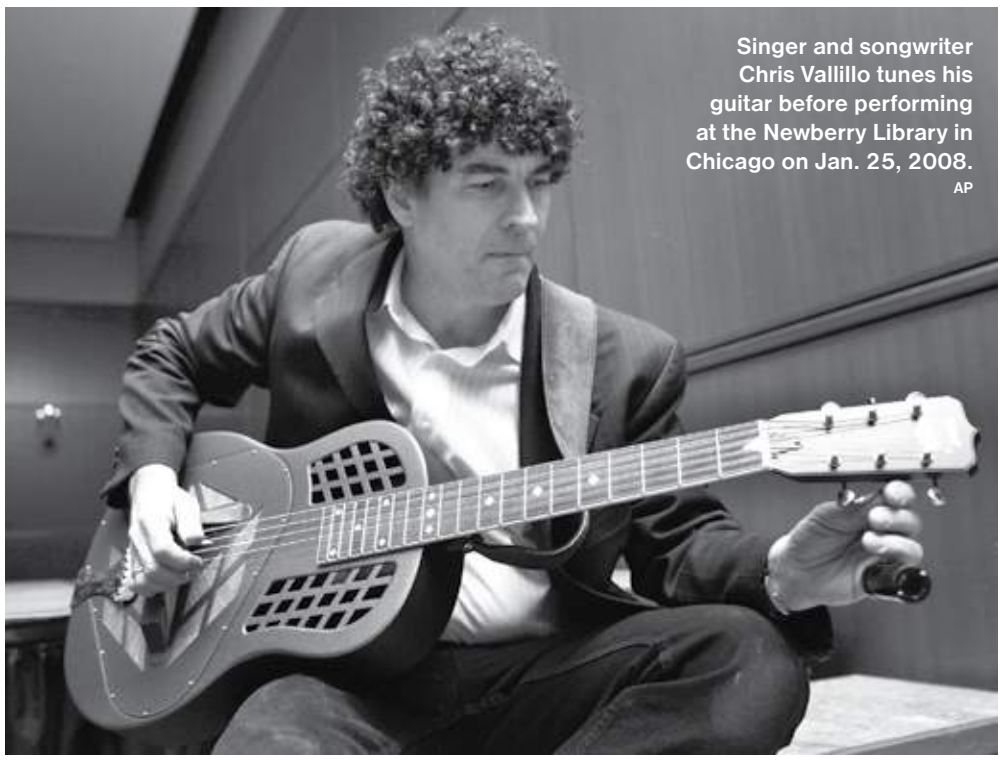
"On the day peace was declared, he broke the news to the crowds by having the White House band perform the song," Vallillo said.

Instruments on the CD include guitar, fiddle, mandolin and harmonica.

Vallillo will be selling it at his shows and on the Internet.

He said recent projects like Ken Burns' "Civil War" documentary and the film "O Brother, Where Art Thou?" have made roots music more accessible to mainstream America.

From 1990 to 1997, Vallillo was host and co-producer of the award-winning public radio series "Rural Route 3." He has sung at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum in Springfield, Ill., other Lincoln historic sites, performing arts centers and small theaters.



Singer and songwriter Chris Vallillo tunes his guitar before performing at the Newberry Library in Chicago on Jan. 25, 2008.
AP

Castro map of failed attack to be sold

MIAMI (AP)—Bernardo Viera Trejo still remembers the sweltering summer day in 1955 when he and his then-friend Fidel Castro met up shortly after the would-be revolutionary's release from prison.

Castro had attempted to overthrow Cuban dictator Fulgencio Batista with an assault on a military barracks. The attack failed and Castro had spent two years behind bars. Viera says that while they chatted, Castro drew a map of the doomed attack and signed it for him with a flourish.

Viera is putting the map up for auction this Thursday at Heritage Auction Galleries in Dallas.

"I believed he was an important person and would become even more so," said Viera, a former journalist who has interviewed luminaries including Ernest Hemingway and Argentinean writer Jorge Luis Borges. "But Fidel, he couldn't understand why I wanted it."

Viera, 75, believed at the time that the attack on the Moncada military barracks was significant even though Castro was then still far from becoming the island's leader. He left for Europe as a journalist for the Spanish-language Cuban magazine Bohemia. Castro fled to Mexico to prepare another coup against Batista.

After Castro won power, Viera like many early supporters soon became disillusioned with the new government's frequent executions, Soviet advisers and attacks on the same press that had heralded Castro's arrival.

Viera eventually settled in Miami. He says he is auctioning the map because of its historic value and because he needs the money. He had read about a similar auction Heritage held for a lock of hair snipped from Castro ally Ernesto "Che" Guevara before his burial in 1967. That lock of hair brought $100,000 in October.

Jaime Suchlicki, head of the University of Miami's Institute for Cuban and Cuban-American Studies, questioned the map's authenticity.

"There's always people selling stuff. People are still selling things from Hitler," Suchlicki said.

Sandra Palomino, a representative of the auction house, said she is convinced Castro's signature is authentic because it matches other verified examples of his signature from that time. Also, it was first published in a book printed in Cuba not long after Castro took over.

"Regardless of what your feelings are, his autograph is highly desired," Palomino said. "He's an important historical figure."

Iraqi deaths pain Sharon Stone

CAIRO, Egypt (AP)—Hollywood icon Sharon Stone believes the Sept. 11, 2001 bombings of the United States should not have been used as a pretext to launch the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, according to her comments Monday in a Saudi-owned newspaper.

The actress said in an interview with the Al Hayat daily that she fails to understand how the American public supported those wars to start with, only to denounce their fallout later. She also bemoaned what she called Americans' decision to ignore the deaths of so many Iraqis.

"When we choose war, we should understand that we choose murder, bloodletting and torture," Stone was quoted as saying. "I feel at great pain when the spotlight is on the death of 4,000 American soldiers, while 600,000 Iraqi deaths are ignored ... War is not a movie, it is a tragedy of dead bodies, victims, the disabled, orphans, widows and the displaced."

Stone spoke in English and her comments were translated and published in Arabic. An English transcript of the interview was not available.

Al Hayat published only excerpts of the interview, made in December when Stone attended the fourth Dubai International Film Festival in the United Arab Emirates. The paper's sister publication, Leha, is to publish the entire interview Wednesday.

According to her remarks, Stone came to the region seeking answers for herself because, she said, the U.S. media have failed to provide Americans with the truth and have distorted it instead.

"I feel sad when I realize how much truth is being changed or obscured in the American media," she said.

Stone added she opposes any military conflict with Iran, saying the West should instead negotiate and use other means of pressure on Tehran, such as a trade boycott and sanctions.

The star of "Basic Instinct" and other movies also criticized both Arab countries and Israel for failing to resolve the decades-long key Middle East conflict.

The region is now "addicted" to the status quo and whenever a solution is close, hysteria prevails instead, Stone was quoted as saying. "People sometimes get used to their choices and they fear change."

In Dubai, Stone also campaigned to raise over US$1 million for AIDS research and awareness about the disease which remains taboo in the Arab world.

Autism group demands apology from CBS

NEW YORK (AP)—A national autism advocacy group is demanding an apology from CBS over a disparaging remark a contestant on the reality show "Big Brother" made about people with the disorder.

John Gilmore, executive director of Autism United, said Monday that his group has been trying to speak with CBS executives since last week's broadcast.

On that episode, a contestant named Adam, who claims to work for an autism foundation, said he would spend his winnings on a hair salon for people with developmental disabilities "so retards can get it together and get their hair done."

His partner, Sheila, told him: "Don't call them that."

Adam responded: "Disabled kids. I can call them whatever I want. I work with them all day, OK?"

The show's Web site describes him as a 29-year-old public relations manager from Delray Beach, Fla.

In a statement released Monday, CBS condemned Adam's comments, saying they don't represent opinions held by the network or the program's producers.

"We certainly find the statements made by Adam to be offensive but believe they were countered by the immediate reaction of shock and condemnation from a fellow houseguest, Sheila," the statement said. "Adam's remarks would not have been permitted to air unchallenged."

"Big Brother" also has been condemned for contestants' remarks on incest, race, ethnicity and sexual orientation. Some contestants have been removed following incidents that were deemed violent or racist.

The premise of the show is that contestants—or "houseguests"—are isolated from the outside world while under constant surveillance. Once a week, they vote to evict a member of the group.

When just two people remain, a jury of voted-off contestants picks the "Big Brother" winner of the $500,000 grand prize.

Autism is a complex disorder featuring poor social interaction and communication skills.

Lohan recreates Monroe photo shoot

NEW YORK (AP)—Lindsay Lohan is following in the footsteps of the most famous blond bombshell of them all - Marilyn Monroe.

In the issue of New York magazine on sale Monday, the 21-year-old star of "Mean Girls" and "Freaky Friday" poses nude for photographer Bert Stern in a recreation of one of Monroe's most famous photo shoots, done shortly before she died.

Stern photographed Monroe in 1962 at the Hotel Bel-Air in California, six weeks before she was found dead from an overdose of barbiturates. Those images for Vogue magazine feature Monroe in next to nothing, posing nude with some scarves and jewelry as her accessories and sipping champagne.

Stern recreated those images with Lohan this month, at the same hotel, with Lohan wearing a blond wig and not much else.

In the essay accompanying the photos, Lohan, who admitted to a serious interest in Monroe, said deciding to do the photo shoot was easy.

"I didn't have to put much thought into it. I mean, Bert Stern? Doing a Marilyn shoot? When is that ever going to come up? It's really an honor," she told the magazine.

Lohan described Monroe's suicide as "tragic" and said it, along with the Jan. 22 death of actor Heath Ledger from an accidental overdose of prescription drugs, "are both prime examples of what this industry can do to someone."

The actress, who has been in and out of rehab after two arrests last year on drunken driving and cocaine charges, said she didn't know why the industry wreaked such havoc on some stars, adding, "I sure as hell wouldn't let it happen to me."

Stern told The Associated Press that he found women like Lohan and her tabloid companions Paris Hilton and Britney Spears "interesting."

"They're girls that draw attention to their notoriety and their celebrity through their behavior," he said Monday.

He noted that Monroe and Lohan had similar problems with alcohol but added that—in contrast to the sessions with Monroe—there was no alcohol on the set when he photographed Lohan.

He said he thought the photo shoot would be good for the young actress, giving her the chance to portray herself as a grown-up. He also lauded her for her willingness to do it in the nude.

"I thought she was a natural, not at all squeamish," he said.

A phone message left for Lohan's publicist Leslie Sloane-Zelnik seeking comment Monday was not immediately returned.

This photo provided by New York magazine features Lindsay Lohan posing as Marilyn Monroe on the cover of the magazine's Feb. 25, 2008 issue. Clad in not much more than diamonds and sheer fabric, Lohan is pictured inside assuming the same poses Monroe did in her infamous "last sitting" for photographer Bert Stern 46 years ago. AP

Alan Menken looks for another Oscar

BEVERLY HILLS, Calif. (AP)—If it truly is a pleasure just to be nominated for an Oscar, Alan Menken must be Hollywood's happiest man.

The co-composer of songs from Walt Disney's musical hit "Enchanted" has three of the five nominations in the original-song category going into Sunday's Academy Awards.

While that's not a record - three of Henry Krieger's songs from "Dreamgirls" were nominated just last year—news of the triple play still took Menken by surprise.

"My publicist, Ray Costa, called me and said, 'Alan, you're nominated for "Happy Working Song" ... and "So Close" ... and "That's How You Know,"' Menken recalled for AP Television at the Oscar nominees luncheon in early February. "I was really blind-sided, completely blind-sided. Three nominations. I said, 'Now we're gonna lose.'"

Menken, 58, said he expects that the three "Enchanted" entries, co-written with Stephen Schwartz, may split the vote, improving odds for the other song contenders at the ceremony: "Falling Slowly" from "Once" and "Raise It Up" from "August Rush."

Last year, the three "Dreamgirls" songs lost out to Melissa Etheridge's "I Need to Wake Up" from "An Inconvenient Truth."

Then again, Menken and his late co-writer Howard Ashman got three 1991 nods for "Beauty and the Beast" and won for the title tune.

Other Oscars Menken has won include those for co-writing "Under the Sea" from "The Little Mermaid," "A Whole New World" from "Aladdin" and "Colors of the Wind" from "Pocahontas."

Those Oscars "live in my studio, and they're all in a cabinet," Menken said. "And I occasionally let them out and let people hold them."

Menken said he points out the statues when he has a studio disagreement with a collaborator.

"I say, 'Turn around and look over there,'" he noted with a laugh. "It's obnoxious, but sometimes effective."

Judge to settle McCartney divorce

LONDON (AP)—Paul McCartney and Heather Mills' weeklong divorce hearing ended Monday without a deal, and a judge will now impose a settlement on the warring couple.

As legal teams left court, McCartney's lawyer Nicholas Mostyn told reporters that judge Hugh Bennett had reserved his ruling. The judge will now spend several weeks working out a settlement.

Mills and McCartney separated in 2006 after four years of marriage. They went to court to decide on Mills' share of the former Beatle's fortune, which is estimated at as much as $1.6 billion.

Mills, 40, smiled as she left London's Royal Courts of Justice with her entourage. McCartney, 65, did not attend, although he was in court to face his estranged wife every day last week.

Media reports have suggested McCartney offered his wife around S$50 million and that she was seeking at least double that amount.

Few details have emerged from Court 34 since the hearing began Feb. 11. Unlike most British court cases, divorce proceedings are heard in private, and the courtroom is closed to journalists and the public.

Heather Mills smiles as she leaves the High Court in London, Monday, Feb. 18, 2008.

The terms of a settlement will not become public unless it is challenged in the Court of Appeal, or one of the parties chooses to reveal details.

Mills is a former model whose left leg was amputated below the knee after a motorcycle accident in 1993. She became active in campaigning against land mines and in favor of animal welfare.

The couple married in June 2002 - four years after the death of McCartney's first wife, Linda - and their daughter Beatrice was born in October the following year. They announced their separation in 2006, and McCartney filed for divorce alleging "unreasonable behavior" by his wife.

9 reasons why Jackson masterpiece remains a 'Thriller'

By ANN POWERS
(C) 2008, LOS ANGELES TIMES

There are two ways to listen to Michael Jackson's "Thriller," 25 years after its release. Scandal addicts will find trace evidence of the obsessions that would sink the greatest pop star of his generation into Hollywood Babylon: the repressed, explosive sexuality in his breathy vocals; the racial ambivalence he would encode on his body, evident in genre-busting songs such as "Beat It"; the innocence fetish that made ballads such as "Human Nature" sparkle but led the singer into a shadowy life among paid-off children in his own Neverland.

The dirty stuff is all there. But so is wonder, pure and complex, and some willful forgetting can bring you back to it. Put aside Jacko, the tragic example. Return to Michael, the musical prodigy who filtered a host of cross-cultural and intergenerational influences through his own weird radar to create music as surprising as it was definitive.

Enjoy that Michael, at play in the fields of new technology with producer Quincy Jones and the best team of studio pros since Brian Wilson roped in the Wrecking Crew. At 24, that Michael embodied the vertiginous power of being young—his love songs were all longing and playful innuendo, his angry songs half bluster and half nightmare. That Michael believed that pop songs could have the effect that classic tales have on kids, coloring their dreams and staying forever in their memories. "Thriller" was the first Neverland he built—the one he'll never lose in bankruptcy court.

The just-issued 25th anniversary of "Thriller" includes remixes by will.i.am and Kanye West and guest appearances from Fergie and Akon. But the classic content is what still resonates, even if younger listeners need to be lured in by names they associate with the Hot 100. Here, nine *Los Angeles Times* staff writers and contributors offer their views of the album's original tracks.

"Wanna Be Startin' Somethin'"

Hot as Jackson was after the quantum leap that 1979's "Off the Wall" brought his solo career, few expected him to match, much less dramatically surpass, those heights so quickly. But "Thriller's" leadoff track immediately established the new album as another giant step forward. It connected to "Off the Wall" with an irresistible Afro-Caribbean funk dance-floor pulse and peppery horn accents akin to "Don't Stop 'Til You Get Enough," then rocketed to new heights with even more sinewy bass and guitar lines propelling his impossibly nimble vocals. If "Off the Wall" demonstrated that Jackson was a kid no more, "Somethin' " signaled the full maturity of his musical acumen. All the more impressive for a song built on just two chords. ***(Randy Lewis)***

"Baby Be Mine"

Imagine if this weren't the better of the two non-singles from a monster album but a one-shot single by an unknown artist. The sweet midtempo glide of "Baby Be Mine" probably would have bubbled into the R&B Top 20 and gotten lots of roller-skate play, been included on recent mix CDs by cutting-edge European DJs and been remade as a slow jam at least three times. We would have wondered at the bionic singer, the effervescent synth arrangements, the popping groove. In short, it would sound like the hidden classic it remains, even in plain sight. ***(Michaelangelo Matos)***

"The Girl Is Mine"

Treacly, insipid, weak, embarrassing—that's how detractors describe Jackson's gentle sparring match with his then-favorite Beatle, Paul McCartney. Borne forward on a beat light as hair mousse

and synth flourishes supplied by the guys from Toto, it's a long way from the paranoid funk of "Billie Jean." But its spun-sugar vocal line is like the G-rated version of "Unchained Melody," and the cornball lyrics (I know, "doggone") invoke a show-tune Arcadia that both MJ and Macca fought to preserve as pop got ever filthier. The lift Jackson gives the word "endlessly" midsong can still make a listener feel like she's swimming in a sea of Love's Baby Soft. ***(Ann Powers)***

"Thriller"

If ever a video killed the radio star, "Thriller" was it. The song was adequately groovy—funked-out beat, lyrics seemingly lifted from some little kid's "scary storybook"—but the video was legendary: Costing $800,000, the 14-minute mini-film was the most expensive video of its time. Back then it was over the top; to today's viewer, jaded by bloated-budget videos, it still looks epic—and deliciously campier than ever. That dialogue ("I'm not like other guys")! That Vincent Price rap interlude! And, most of all, those choreographed zombies, dancing in a style that—thanks to Usher, Ne-Yo and Chris Brown—still gets its close-up on MTV. ***(Baz Dreisinger)***

"Beat It"

A secret not closely guarded: The uncredited guitarist who whipped out the fluttering, squealing solo on this ode to macho cowardice was Eddie Van Halen, whose extracurriculars ranked among the provocations for singer David Lee Roth's 1985 departure from the megalithic rock band Van Halen. The aerodynamic metal flight pumped crossover fuel that would boost the success of "Thriller"—a gimmick Jackson would flog later with spots from Slash and Carlos Santana. Without the Van Halen precedent, there might have been no collaboration of Run-DMC and Aerosmith on the 1986 rap/rock version of "Walk This Way." ***(Greg Burk)***

"Billie Jean"

Twenty-five years later, "Thriller's" central chamber has lost none of its fevered mystery. This is where the album's material plane gives way to a haunted interior, excavated by that remorseless bass line and shaped by a taut interplay of instruments—the arrangement is ingenious, so lean and spare that it's hard to accept that there are three synthesizers at work. Jackson finds a new voice here, a victim's voice that shudders in the shadows of this remarkable sonic space, lashing at his own naivete and at the false accusers who were just starting to gather at his door. ***(Richard Cromelin)***

"Human Nature"

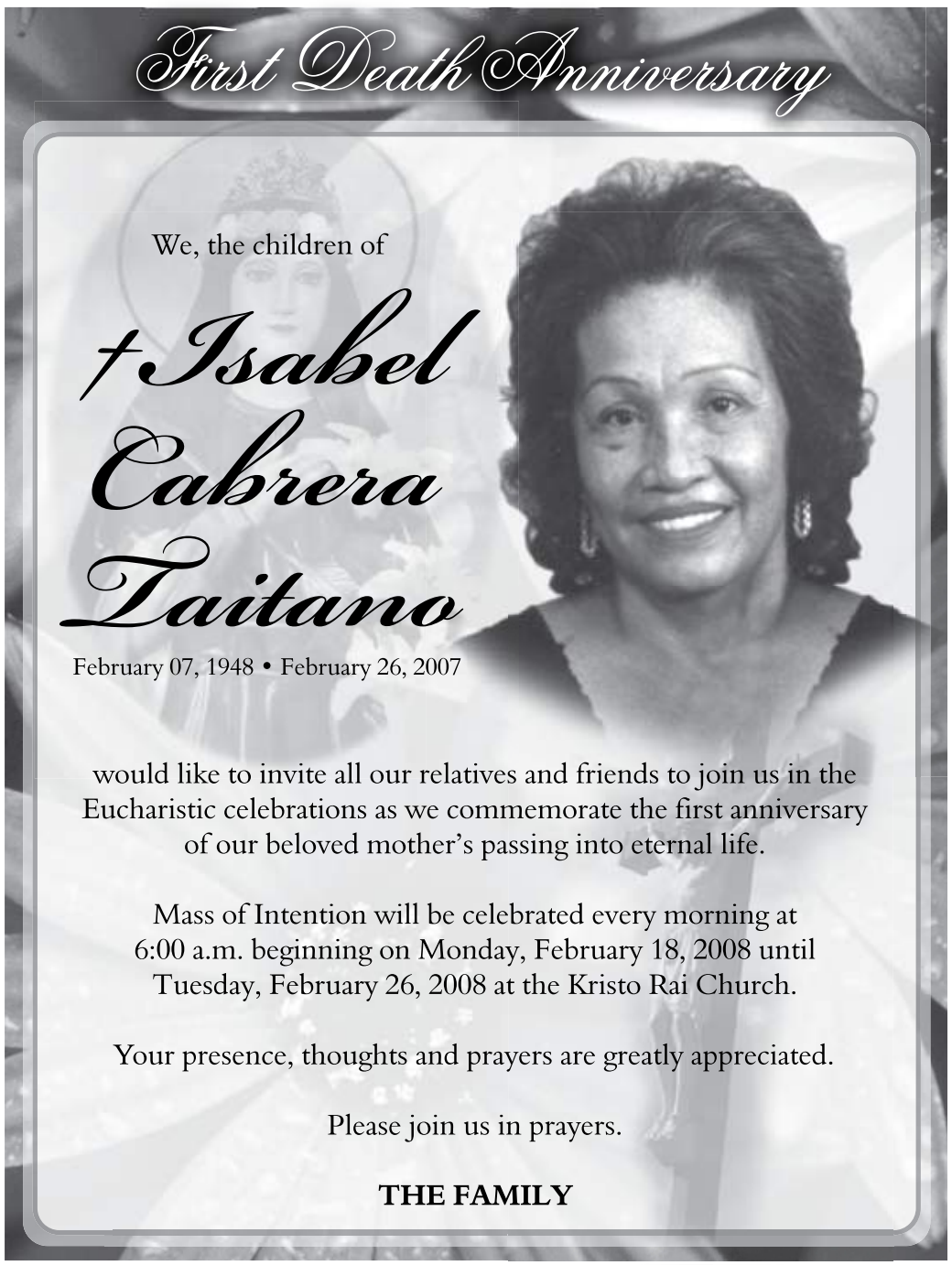
Jackson is a sensual vampire flying over the city looking for juicy necks to bite. A template for new jack swing and hip-hop soul ballads, "Human Nature" is comparatively slower and more intimate than "Thriller's" other songs. "If this town is just an apple, let me take a bite," quivers Jackson's voice over a cascading synthesizer and percolating bass line. Though written by John Bettis and Steve Porcaro of Toto, the lyrics resonate with Jackson's yearning to break free from his tower of celebrity and mingle with young people in a "city that winks its sleepless eye." ***(Serena Kim)***

"P.Y.T. (Pretty Young Thing)"

It's all about the chipmunk. The production has a compelling charm already; it's not as forceful as "Beat It" or as slick as "Human Nature," but those squiggly synths and chewy bass lines do their work well. But besides the robo-accented "P.Y.T." hook, what seals the deal is that helium-pitched voice after the bridge. Honestly, to this day, I still can't decipher what line is blurted out, but just the chipmunk effect has been enough to imprint the song in my head. Given that Kanye West looped the same passage for his Grammy-winning "Good Life" only confirms I'm not alone in my infatuation. ***(Oliver Wang)***

"The Lady in My Life"

And the '80s pop big bang ends with a ... whimper? So it might have seemed at the time, this Rod Temperton-penned and arranged trifle closed "Thriller" on an unconvincingly romantic note—even pre-scandal. Yet today, "Lady" shines for its classic simplicity and nuanced craft, a verse melody straight from vintage Burt Bacharach (the muted trumpet early on leaves no doubt) topped with a chorus that's almost a Stevie Wonder homage. And Jackson's delivery is refreshingly unaffected—not until shortly before the final fade does he even let out an ooo! No, not a whimper. A sigh. ***(Steve Hochman)***


First Death Anniversary
We, the children of
†Isabel Cabrera Taitano
February 07, 1948 • February 26, 2007
would like to invite all our relatives and friends to join us in the Eucharistic celebrations as we commemorate the first anniversary of our beloved mother's passing into eternal life.
Mass of Intention will be celebrated every morning at 6:00 a.m. beginning on Monday, February 18, 2008 until Tuesday, February 26, 2008 at the Kristo Rai Church.
Your presence, thoughts and prayers are greatly appreciated.
Please join us in prayers.
THE FAMILY

Croc hunter's son unfazed by snake bite

AP

Bindi Irwin, left, her brother Robert Irwin pose for pictures during a promotional event at FAO Schwarz in New York, Monday, Feb. 18, 2008. The Irwin's were there to promote their new line of toys and their conservation efforts.

NEW YORK (AP)—Like father, like son? The 4-year-old son of "Crocodile Hunter" Steve Irwin wasn't at all alarmed when he was recently bitten by a baby boa constrictor, according to his mother.

"He picked one of them up and it bit him on the finger, and he was so proud to have copped his first hit," Irwin's widow, Terri, said Monday at an appearance at FAO Schwarz with her two children to promote a new line of toys.

"He said, 'I hope it wasn't venomous,' so I assured Robert I wouldn't actually let him play with venomous snakes," she added.

Terri Irwin said the couple's 9-year-old daughter, Bindi, was first bitten by a snake when she was 18 months old.

The girl, who is featured in the Discovery Kids Channel show "Bindi the Jungle Girl," posed for cameras with a new action figure in her likeness.

"It's every little girl's dream to have an exact look-alike doll. It's amazing," said Bindi, who was signing action figure toys of her late father.

Steve Irwin, known through his nature TV series as a wrangler of crocodiles and snakes, died in 2006 from a stingray's barbed tail during an underwater documentary shoot. He was 44.

Irwin provoked an international outcry in 2004 after being filmed holding his then 1-month-old son while feeding a snapping crocodile.

Spice Girls' driver helps nab suspect

BURTON, Mich. (AP)—The driver of a tour bus for the Spice Girls has helped police in Michigan arrest a man suspected in a carjacking. Police say the bus driver called 911 to report a possible drunk driver weaving in and out of traffic on Interstate 75 in the Detroit area on Saturday. The Spice Girls were performing that night at The Palace of Auburn Hills northwest of Detroit.

Police said they arrested a motorist and turned him over to police in the town of Burton in connection with a carjacking at a gas station.

The motorist was being held in the Genesee County Jail awaiting arraignment.

Police did not immediately identify the Spice Girls' bus driver or the man who was arrested.

AP

Katt Williams, wearing a moneybag necklace with his initial on it, arrives at the "Comedy Central Roast of Flavor Flav" in Burbank, Calif., in this July 22, 2007, file photo.

Williams hands out $100 bills

WEST HOLLYWOOD, Calif. (AP)—Even a standup comedian can use a good prop, and Katt Williams had one of the best—a briefcase stuffed with cash. While he cracked jokes at the Laugh Factory on Sunday night, the comedian with a taste for fedoras and wide lapels worked the audience, handing out $100 bills to everybody.

In all, the comedian handed out about $29,000, Laugh Factory owner Jamie said.

"You should have seen it," Masada said. "Some people were crying. They came to see the show and they got $100."

Williams' manager didn't immediately respond to an e-mail Tuesday, but Masada said the comedian told the audience he hadn't forgotten his roots and wanted to thank his loyal audience.

Carey's single offers promise of more

It's nice to have Mariah Carey doing what she does best. Her new single "Touch My Body" (Island Def Jam) is in that "We Belong Together" sweet spot, a midtempo R&B ballad that lets her show off her vocal abilities, but not too much. Crafted by Carey, with help from The-Dream and C. "Tricky" Stewart, "Body" has just enough streetwise touches to sound current and just enough balladry to make a bid for timelessness.

It's probably the best opening single she's had since "Heartbreaker" introduced "Rainbow" in 1999, which is a good sign for her much-anticipated "E(equals)MC2" album, due in April. ***(Newsday)***

New 'Star Wars' film due in summer

HOLLYWOOD—First "Indiana Jones," and now "Star Wars"—this summer is turning out to be the season of George Lucas.

"Star Wars: The Clone Wars," a new stylized, computer-animated feature film, will open Aug. 15 in theaters and set the stage for a tie-in television series with the same name and mode of artwork that will begin airing as a 30-minute weekly series in the fall on the Cartoon Network and TNT.

The film and series will center on the wartime tales of Anakin Skywalker and Obi-Wan Kenobi and feature Padme Amidala, Mace Windu, Count Dooku and the other characters introduced in the second trilogy of live-action "Star Wars" films that began in 1999.

For casual fans trying to keep track of the timeline, this film and series would take place after the events of the 2002 movie "Attack of the Clones" and right before those in the grimmer 2005 installment "Revenge of the Sith," which shows Anakin succumbing to the dark side of the Force and donning the black cape of Darth Vader.

"I felt like there were a lot more 'Star Wars' stories left to tell," Lucas said in a Tuesday news release. "I was eager to start telling some of them through animation and, at the same time, push the art of the animation forward."

Lucas

There already was a 2-D animated series called "Clone Wars" that centered on the conflict between the Jedis of the Republic and separatist groups and their battle droids, but this new film and series will be later in the continuity and have a dramatically different look that melds photo-realistic battle sequences (think of an enhanced, top-flight video game) and stylized characters that sometimes resemble marionettes.

Lucas has also said that he is working toward a live-action television series based in the "Star Wars" universe but that it would not feature the central characters of the iconic franchise, which has grossed $4.3 billion in theaters worldwide. "It's about minor characters," the filmmaker told The Times in October. "It has nothing to do with Luke Skywalker or Darth Vader or any of those people. It's completely different. But it's a good idea, and it's going to be a lot of fun to do."

The other famous franchise associated with Lucas is swinging back this year as well. "Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull" arrives on Memorial Day and brings the feisty archaeologist of the title back to theaters for the first time since 1989. Lucas, who created the character, is executive producer and shares writing credits with David Koepp. Steven Spielberg returns as the franchise's director.

Effort to mend broken family ties meets stiff resistance

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

DearAbby

DEAR ABBY: My husband's sister, "Mia," is a lesbian who came out to her family 10 years ago. Her parents disowned her. We were just out of high school, and for years we had no idea why. We were not allowed to invite Mia to our wedding or to have any contact with her.

Several years later, she began trying to repair their relationship, despite the fact that she's forbidden to talk about her life or bring her partner anywhere near them. This was when we learned what had happened, and we were appalled at how Mia had been treated.

When she comes to town for holidays, she stays with us. Because of this, my in-laws treat us like "sinners" just as they do her, and we're caught in the middle.

We have tried explaining to these family members that they are entitled to their position and we're entitled to ours; that Mia is family and deserves respect and kindness. They call us liberal freaks with no moral values and say we should stand up to her and not let her "manipulate" us. My husband and I are tired of the drama we get at holiday time. Not only do they usually pick a fight with Mia while she's here, but they also won't speak to us for two weeks afterward. The last two times she came, Mia has either had to cut her trip short or has been reduced to tears by the harsh words from family members.

If you wonder why Mia even bothers coming home, it's because she wants to maintain contact with us and she loves her nieces and nephews. How do we handle these people, or do we just give up?

ODD ONES OUT IN OHIO

DEAR ODD ONES OUT: Stand your ground. Do not allow yourselves to be bullied or emotionally blackmailed into rejecting your husband's sister. You are neither morally challenged nor "liberal freaks" for trying to help bridge the gap with the family.

Frankly, your sister-in-law must be extremely resilient to have tolerated the abuse she's getting from these "good" people. They may not approve of her sexual orientation, but she did not choose it—it's who she is. It seems this self-righteous family's "moral values" do not include tolerance.

■ ■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: I share a room with my stepsisters during visitation at my dad's. Their room doesn't have a lock, and my stepmom, "Muriel," doesn't believe in knocking before coming into their room. My stepsisters are used to it and don't care. However, Muriel is not my mom, and it's embarrassing to be barged in on without warning, especially when I'm undressed.

Last weekend she walked in after I had just taken a shower and was completely naked. Muriel couldn't understand why I'd have a problem with it, since we're both females and I was already naked in front of my stepsisters.

I have asked her nicely to please knock when I'm there, but she says, "A mother doesn't have to knock when coming into her own daughters' (or stepdaughter's) room." Muriel said I have a "silly hang-up" and need to get over it. "I wouldn't be doing you any favors," she said, "if I gave in."

Is my request unreasonable? How should I handle this?

FEELS LIKE CINDERELLA

DEAR FEELS LIKE CINDERELLA: It doesn't appear that you and Muriel are particularly close, or even on the same wavelength. She's being heavy-handed in the way she is asserting herself, and you should talk to your father and mother about it.

Your stepmother is the adult, and she has allowed this to be turned into a power struggle. She's not your mother, and as you are a guest in their home, some common courtesy should be extended.

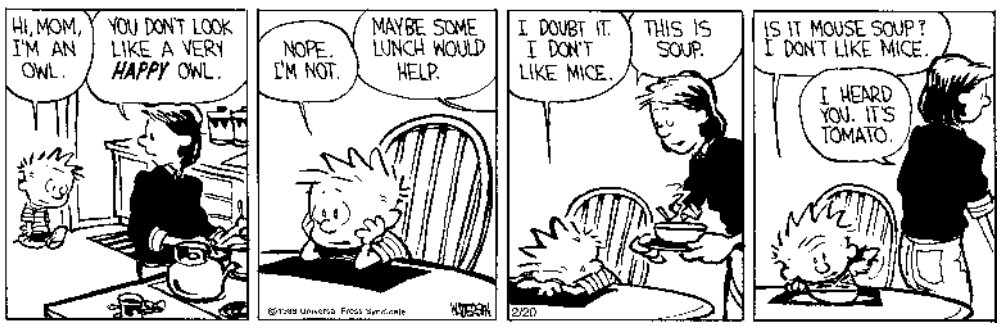
Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Abby shares more than 100 of her favorite recipes in two booklets: "Abby's Favorite Recipes" and "More Favorite Recipes by Dear Abby." Send a business-size, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for $12 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby – Cookbooklet Set, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Postage is included in price.)

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

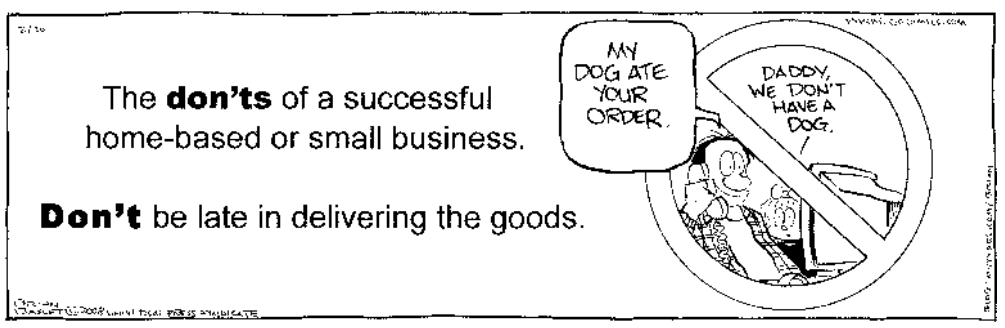

HI, MOM, I'M AN OWL.
YOU DON'T LOOK LIKE A VERY HAPPY OWL.
NOPE. I'M NOT.
MAYBE SOME LUNCH WOULD HELP.
I DOUBT IT. I DON'T LIKE MICE.
THIS IS SOUP.
IS IT MOUSE SOUP? I DON'T LIKE MICE.
I HEARD YOU. IT'S TOMATO.

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

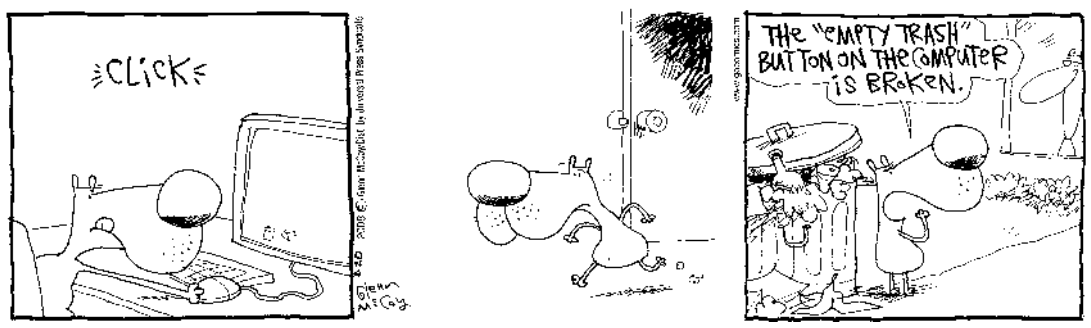
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset


The don'ts of a successful home-based or small business.
Don't be late in delivering the goods.
MY DOG ATE YOUR ORDER.
DADDY, WE DON'T HAVE A DOG.

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

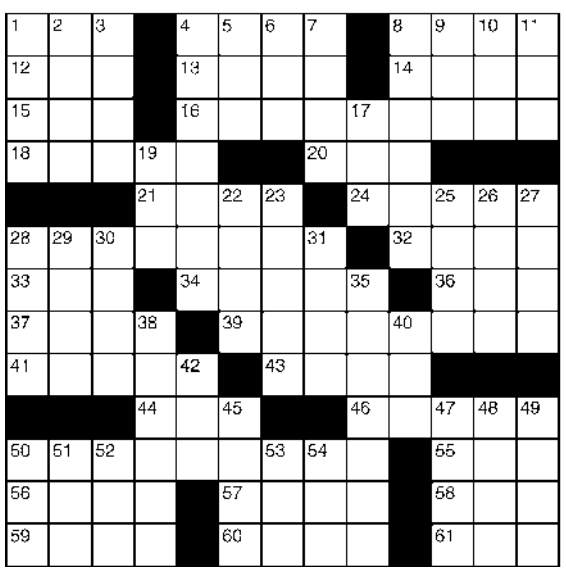
ACROSS
1 Comedian DeLuise
4 Get wind of
8 Pass over
12 Regret
13 Big party
14 Top-notch
15 Performance
16 Mat activity
18 Motif
20 Con counterpart
21 2004 Anne Hathaway role
24 Hayseed
28 Using one's elbows
32 Infamous lyre player
33 Oklahoma city
34 Pops
36 Brooch
37 Chinese dynasty
39 Baby bird
41 Sired
43 Old woman's home?
44 Medic
46 Throw
50 Wolf's action?
55 Savings-plan acronym
56 Car
57 Neighborhood
58 Tasseled topper
59 Night light?
60 Sob
61 Tina of "30 Rock"

DOWN
1 "Phooey!"
2 "That hurts!"
3 Apportion
4 "The Time Machine" author
5 Listener
6 Potent brew
7 Grate
8 Bar
9 Japanese pond carp
10 B&B
11 Cribbage scorer
17 Take a whack at
19 Bumped into
22 Simba, e.g.
23 South American range
25 Military cap
26 Ms. Brockovich
27 Protracted
28 Doorframe piece
29 Garfield's pal
30 Crooned
31 Long cut
35 Temporary solution
38 Sponsored lad
40 Wahine's bestowal
42 Youngster
45 Talon
47 Lovers' quarrel
48 Saskatchewan tribe
49 Unclear
50 Pale
51 Shade
52 Judge Lance
53 Rage
54 Born

Solution time: 21 mins.

B	A	N	D	■	D	R	O	P	■	G	A	L
A	G	U	F	■	A	O	N	F	■	O	B	I
H	O	N	E	Y	M	O	O	N	■	E	E	L
■	■	■	P	E	N	T	■	N	A	S	T	Y
H	O	P	F	S	■	■	H	I	R	T	■	■
E	L	A	N	■	B	L	U	E	M	O	O	N
L	E	S	■	S	O	I	L	S	■	P	R	O
M	O	O	N	W	A	L	K	■	N	O	E	L
■	■	D	O	I	T	■	■	M	C	T	O	O
S	T	O	R	M	■	L	E	A	P	■	■	■
L	A	B	■	M	O	O	N	S	H	I	N	E
A	L	L	■	E	R	G	O	■	E	V	I	L
D	E	E	■	R	E	E	S	■	W	E	L	K

Yesterday's answer 2-20



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Brian Littrell, 33; Andrew Shue, 41; Cindy Crawford, 42; French Stewart, 44

Happy Birthday: Don't hold back. Prepare to think, act and take responsibility. There's no time to waste on stupid arguments or past regrets. Live in the present with the intent of making the future better for yourself and the people around you. Your numbers are 3, 15, 22, 25, 30, 44

ARIES (*March 21-April 19*): Take care of the little things on your list. Do something that will improve your health and well-being. Avoid discussions that could lead to an argument with someone who has the potential to disrupt your world. ✪✪✪✪✪

TAURUS (*April 20-May 20*): You can expect someone to give you a hard time if you discuss matters about which you are emotional. Pick up skills that will enable you to advance. The more you can do to improve yourself and your talents, the closer you will come to getting a preferred position. ✪✪

GEMINI (*May 21-June 20*): You don't have to make changes because someone else wants you to. Things should be working to your advantage, so don't look back or become entangled in what others are doing. A love relationship can be improved through communication. ✪✪✪✪

CANCER (*June 21-July 22*): You have more options than you realize. You may not like change but today it can open up the door to a new, more suitable lifestyle. Don't follow someone else's beliefs. ✪✪✪

LEO (*July 23-Aug. 22*): Be honest about what you can offer. Leading someone on who is counting on you for future support will end up being costly. Chances are good you will meet someone special, leaving you questioning some of your current relationships. ✪✪✪

VIRGO (*Aug. 23-Sept. 22*): Look for what's hidden and you will understand what's going on. Nothing will be left out in the open. If you update your own looks and attitude, you will impress everyone and have greater confidence. ✪✪✪

LIBRA (*Sept. 23-Oct. 22*): Push for what you want and help those you feel deserve it but don't overload your plate, thinking you will be praised for your thoughtfulness. Someone you least expect is likely to take advantage of your generosity if you aren't careful. Love is in the stars. ✪✪✪

SCORPIO (*Oct. 23-Nov. 21*): Explore different lifestyles, traditions and ways of doing things and you will find what works well for you. A tweak here and there to the way you've been conducting your life will help you appreciate what you have to work with. An offer is heading your way. ✪✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS (*Nov. 22-Dec. 21*): A trip may be on your mind but, before you sign up for something or take off, tie up loose ends. Red tape issues will develop and you don't want to be stranded in a foreign country or caught without the proper documentation. ✪✪✪✪

CAPRICORN (*Dec. 22-Jan. 19*): Get serious about money and don't allow anyone to talk you into making a purchase or signing up for something that you don't need. It's important to be generous to the people you love but not to be taken advantage of. Emotional deception is apparent. ✪✪✪

AQUARIUS (**Jan. 20-Feb. 18**): Take a closer look before making a move that may not be good for you. You have so much to offer and even more to receive if you play your cards right. Believe in your abilities and you will improve your future. ✪✪✪

PISCES (*Feb. 19-March 20*): Hidden agendas will be the issue today. Whether dealing with colleagues, friends or family, you must look at how everyone will benefit from your decisions. Make changes based on what will benefit you. Someone isn't being honest with you. ✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are intense, industrious and intuitive. You are an activist, a crusader and a humanitarian, finding solutions to make your world better.

Eugenia's Web sites: ***astroadvice.com*** *for fun,* ***eugenialast.com*** *for confidential consultations*

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

COPYRIGHT 2007 UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

				9				
		3		2		4		
		8	7				9	
		6					1	
9								5
5		1					3	7	4
		2		4	7			8	
		7		3	6			9	
		9	6	1	8	2	5	4	

Difficulty Level ★★★ 2/20

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer

5	9	2	7	4	6	1	8	3
8	3	7	9	2	1	4	6	5
4	6	1	8	5	3	2	7	9
2	1	5	6	3	9	7	4	8
6	8	3	4	7	2	5	9	1
9	7	4	5	1	8	6	3	2
3	2	8	1	6	7	9	5	4
7	5	9	2	8	4	3	1	6
1	4	6	3	9	5	8	2	7

Difficulty Level ★★ 2/19

©2007 Conceptis Puzzles, Dist. by King Features Syndicate, Inc.

WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and **CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD.** The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

A TOUR OF MY HOME **Solution: 8 letters**

E	D	O	O	F	R	A	M	E	S	S	C	C	N	C
E	B	N	N	A	F	E	B	A	T	H	R	O	O	M
F	K	E	O	O	A	A	V	O	A	E	S	M	I	S
F	V	E	S	T	K	G	R	I	S	P	P	P	S	L
O	S	S	T	I	U	A	R	S	E	A	I	U	I	W
C	O	I	N	T	G	F	E	A	R	C	C	T	V	O
U	C	G	N	E	L	R	K	T	T	U	E	E	E	B
T	K	C	M	K	D	E	M	I	P	E	S	R	L	O
L	S	O	I	E	R	E	S	B	S	R	R	E	E	O
E	H	U	S	S	N	S	O	T	E	T	N	S	T	K
R	N	I	D	T	U	A	I	W	O	D	H	O	L	S
Y	G	I	S	E	R	M	O	I	E	O	W	G	L	H
N	E	M	W	D	E	L	D	R	W	E	L	E	I	E
S	T	E	C	A	F	A	S	E	L	I	T	S	R	L
N	T	N	I	A	R	D	R	S	S	S	A	L	G	F

© 2008 Universal Press Syndicate www.wonderword.com 2/20

Attic, Baking, Bathroom, Blender, Bookshelf, Bowls, Chair, Coffee, Compartments, Computer, Cupboard, Cutlery, Design, Drain, Dresser, Dust, Facets, Flowers, Food, Frames, Futon, Glass, Grater, Grill, Home, Kettle, Lights, Music, Oven, Radio, Receiver, Shower, Sink, Socks, Sofa, Speakers, Spices, Stools, Storage, Television, Tiles, Time, Tissue, Towels, Wine

Yesterday's Answer: Reminders

Treasury S is here! Send check or money order for $10.95 each plus $3.95 postage and handling each S' 4.20 total each. U.S. funds only, for the first volume. $7.50 per for each additional volume, to Universal Press Syndicate, Attn: Wonderword 4520 Main St., Kansas City, Mo 64111 or call toll-free, 1-800-255-5735, ext. 5586. Order online at wp.puzzles.com

CLASSIFIED ADS

FOR RENT RESIDENTIAL

Apartment room for rent: Fully furnished 1 brm, T/B, 24-hr water $210/month, near Conwood | Tel. 287-1372, 235-6748

Apartment for Rent in Aslito. Fully furnished, 24 hrs water. Safe location. Call 256-3864/287-7769

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

1 PLUMBER (W 80655)
Salary:$3.55-$6.25/hour. Benefits: Medical reimbursable; workmen's compensation & insurance. Contact: RJCL Corporation dba RNV Construction @235-8778.

1 CONSTRUCTION WORKER (W 80656)
Salary:$3.05/hour. Benefits: Medical reimbursable; workmen's compensation & insurance. Contact: RJCL Corporation dba RNV Construction @235-8778.

1 PAINTER (W 80657)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Medical reimbursable; workmen's compensation & insurance. Contact: RJCL Corporation dba RNV Construction @235-8778.

1 MATERIAL COORDINATOR (W 80658)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Medical reimbursable; workmen's compensation & insurance. Contact: RJCL Corporation dba RNV Construction @235-8778.

1 CONSTRUCTION WORKER (W 80659)
Salary:$3.05/hour. Benefits: Medical reimbursable; workmen's compensation & insurance. Contact: RJCL Corporation dba RNV Construction @235-8778.

---

1 HOUSEWORKER (W 80660)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: $100.00/monthly deduction housing; $100.00/monthly deduction food; medical & workmen compensation. Contact: Albert O. Tiu @323-8882/85.

---

1 INSURANCE UNDERWRITER (W 80661)
Salary:$1,300.00/monthly. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self provided food; medical & workers compensation. Contact: Pacific Basin Insurance Co.,@234-5860/7861.

---

1 MARKET RESEARCH ANALYST (W 80662)
Salary:$2,000.00/monthly. Benefits: Self arrange housing; self provide food; medical & workers compensation. Contact: Pacific Wine & Spirits (Saipan), dba P.W.S. @234-3182.

---

1 ELECTRICIAN (W 80663)
Salary:$4.75/hour. Benefits: Company provided housing; $8.00/per day food; 100% medical; dental & workers compensation. Contact: Seabridge, Inc. @322-7344.

---

1 AUDITOR (W 80664)
Salary:$1,575.00/monthly. Benefits: Medical & workmen's compensation employer provided. Contact: Bridge Capital, LLC. @322-2222.

---

1 DAYCARE NURSE (W 80665)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self provide housing; self provide food; medical & workmen's compensation. Contact: LBAT Corp. dba Children's World @288-5162.

1 PRE-SCHOOL TEACHER (W 80666)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self provide housing; self provide food; medical & workmen's compensation. Contact: LBAT Corp. dba Children's World @288-5162.

---

1 HOUSE MAINTENANCE (W 80667)
Salary:$3.55-$4.05/hour. Benefits: Medical per CNMI laws & worksman compensation. Contact: Jose A. Ichihara @235-7852.

---

1 HOUSEWORKER (W 80668)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Housing provided; food provided & medical. Contact: Carlene Reyes Tenorio @287-2896.

WHATZIT Solution:
The birds and the bees

---

1 MAINTENANCE REPAIRER (W 80669)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Medical & workmen's compensation. Contact: Pacific Amusement, Inc. @233-4397.

1 COMPUTER TECHNICIAN (W 80670)
Salary:$3.55-$5.45/hour. Benefits: Medical & workmen's compensation. Contact: Pacific Amusement, Inc. @233-4397.

1 ELECTRONIC TECHNICIAN (W 80671)
Salary:$3.55-$7.16/hour. Benefits: Medical & workmen's compensation. Contact: Pacific Amusement, Inc. @233-4397.

---

1 ELECTRICIAN (W 80672)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; employee provided food; health & workers compensation employer provided. Contact: Glicerio D. Arago dba NCI Contractor @287-0847/233-2652.

---

1 SALES REPRESENTATIVE (W 80673)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self arranged food; workers compensation & medical. Contact: Palm Springs Life Extension, Inc. dba Palm Springs SPA, Retail Health Products, Skin Care @233-5317.

---

1 SALES REPRESENTATIVE (W 80674)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Medical & workmen compensation employer provided. Contact: Nero S. Ortizo dba Big Brother Auto Shop @483-7501/898-4110.

---

1 (ASSISTANT) MANAGER (W 80675)
Salary:$4.00/hour. Benefits: Medical & workers compensation provided. Contact: Saipan Magellan, Inc. dba Saipan Magellan Tour/Apples Bar & Rest. @285-7898.

---

2 SOIL CONSERVATIONIST (W 80676)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Medical & workmen's compensation provided. Contact: Tropex Garden Co., Ltd. @288-7999.

---

1 COMMERCIAL CLEANER (WF 0001-1)
Salary:$4:00-4.05/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self provided food; medical & workers compensation provided by employer. Contact: Saipan International School dba SIS @ 288-9660.

SMALL ENGINE REPAIR
LAUNDRY REPAIR
Lawn Mower · Generator Repair
Boat Engine · Bush Cutter Repair
Motor Bike · Rewinding
233-5641
Open 7 Day a Week 9:00 AM-9:00 PM

D' Pirate
SPORT BAR
is looking for attractive
Dancer, Waitress
TWA only
235-3663

FOR HIRE
Accountant • $5.50/hr
Hanmi Professional Services
(6F Nauru Bldg.)
Tel.: 234-3010/235-3010
E-mail: hps@hanmisaipan.com

WANTED
2 COOKS
Expert in International & Japanese Cuisine.
Please call Seastar Restaurant @ 235-6848 or 483-6848

Marianas Maid Services
Are you overwhelmed at work?
Has taking care of your kids and the housework become a burden?
LET US MAKE YOUR HOME OR OFFICE
SPARKLE
Cleaning services starting as low as $30 per cleaning.
All equipment and cleaning supplies provided.
All our staff has been hand picked and are reliable.
Ironing, Laundry, Window washing and many other services available upon request.
Contact Julie at 287-6542 to schedule an appointment.

COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION
EQUAL HOUSING OPPORTUNITY

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

Position: **Manager, Mortgage Credit** **Opening Date: January 19, 2008**
Closing Date: February 20, 2008

Starting Salary: PL 35/01 to PL 35/12 ($28,808 to $49,266 per annum)

Job Location: NMHC Central Office, Garapan, Saipan, MP 96950

Detailed job description, qualification requirements and other information may be picked up, together with NMHC's employment application form, during regular working hours at the NMHC Central Office in Garapan, Saipan during regular working hours, 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except CNMI holidays.

All applicants must complete and submit the NMHC Employment Application Form together with required documents that are listed in the Employment Application Package. Failure to provide the required documents will result in automatic disqualification. NMHC and all its properties are drug-free zones; therefore, selected applicant will be subject to pre-employment drug screening.

Applicants are requested to submit their original application and supporting documents to the NMHC Central Office in Garapan, Saipan, no later than 4:30 p.m., Wednesday, February 20, 2008, **OR MAILED AND POSTMARKED** no later than February 20, 2008, to the Corporate Director, Northern Marianas Housing Corporation, P. O. Box 500514, Saipan, MP 96950.

It is the policy of the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) that the merit system will be applied and administered according to the principle of equal opportunity for all citizens and nationals as defined by its personnel regulations and the Northern Marianas Commonwealth Constitution regardless of age, race, sex, religion, political affiliation or belief, marital status, disability or place of origin.

For inquiries, please contact Edith C. Fejeran, Office Manager at (670) 234-9447/7689 or by email to ecfejeran@nmhc.gov.mp NMHC is a fair housing agency and an equal opportunity provider, lender and employer.

/s/ **JOSHUA T. SASAMOTO**
Corporate Director

WHATZIT?™

Find the familiar phrase, saying or name in this arrangement of letters.

JJJ BBB

© 2008 WHATZIT? is a trademark of Paul Sellers. Distributed by Universal Uclick

Find today's solution in this section

CLASSIFIEDS RATES AND POLICIES

Saipan Tribune's Classifieds Section gives you the right exposure without hurting your pockets. Stretch your dollar and get results.

CLASSIFIED ADS

Saipan Tribune also offers a Super Saver Package—a complete 7-day run on both print and online edition, for as low as $25 per 3 liner ad for garage sales, apartment rentals, help wanted, auto and more. You can choose from any of below packages that fits your budget.

ADS (7DAYS)	COMBO (PRINT AND ONLINE)
• 3-Liner	$25
• 5-Liner	$35
• 3-Liner with picture	$45
• 5-Liner with picture	$55

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

All job vacancy announcements will be published for two issues in each of two successive weeks.

1st position	**$13.00**
2nd position	**$5.00**
Succeeding positions	**$2.00**

These rates apply to all job vacancy announcements in Saipan that include corresponding benefits and which positions are all under the same company name and dba.

Newspaper clippings are also available for $.25 per copy.

ADVERTISING DEADLINE

Classified Ads

Ads must be submitted before 12 noon 2 days prior to publication date

Job Vacancy Announcements

Monday Through Friday Issues: All ads placed before 12 noon will come out the next publication date.

Saturday And Sunday Issues:
- *Saipan Tribune:* All ads placed Friday before 12 noon will come out Saturday issue and anything placed thereafter will be published on either Sunday or Monday issues.

CANCELLATION

Classified Ads

Cancellations should be made before 12 noon of the day prior to date of publication.

Job Vacancy Announcements

Cancellations should be made before 12 noon of the day prior to date of publication.

REFUNDS

Refunds will only be made if cancellation deadlines are met. No refunds will be made once ad is already printed.

CHECK YOUR ADS

Saipan Tribune will not be responsible for errors after the first day of publication. Errors should be called in before noon of the issue date. *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

ADVERTISING POLICY

All advertising in the *Saipan Tribune* are subject to applicable rate sheet, copies of which are available from the Advertising Sales Department (please call 235-8747, 235-2769 or 235-6397). All ads will be subject to approval prior to publication. We reserve the right to edit, refuse, reject or cancel any ad at any time. Also, *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

Pettitte apologizes, regrets taking HGH

TAMPA, Fla. (AP)—Andy Pettitte had finished 55 1/2 minutes of apologies, explaining why he used human growth hormone and why he said what he did about Roger Clemens. Derek Jeter walked over, and the captain wrapped his arms around the visibly relieved Pettitte.

Following an offseason of turmoil, Pettitte was welcomed back to the New York Yankees with open arms.

"My boys are hanging out over there," Pettitte said Monday after arriving at his news conference Monday and unexpectedly seeing Jeter, Jorge Posada and Mariano Rivera off to his right, sitting in a row.

Whether Pettitte can repair his relationship with Clemens remains to be seen. They haven't spoken in more than a month, since Pettitte corroborated allegations of drug use against the seven-time Cy Young Award winner.

"Obviously it's put a strain, I think, on our friendship," Pettitte said. "I love him like a brother."

On the day he reported to spring training, Pettitte faced reporters for the first time since the Mitchell Report was released in December and revealed accusations he had used HGH.

"I felt like I need to come out, be forward with this," Pettitte said. "Whatever circumstances or repercussions come with it, I'll take and I'll take like a man and I'll try to do my job."

Other athletes have ducked tough questions about allegations of drug use, using evasions and nonspecific replies. Pettitte admitted his mistakes and several times patiently asked reporters, "Did I answer your question?"

AP

New York Yankees pitcher Andy Pettitte answers questions at a news conference Monday, Feb. 18, 2008 in Tampa, Fla.

Flanked by manager Joe Girardi and general manager Brian Cashman, Pettitte had a hint of the shadow on his face that he's shown on the mound during so many postseason games. He seemed skittish at the start as he read from notes.

"I want to apologize to the New York Yankees' and to the Houston Astros' organizations and to their fans and to all my teammates and to all of baseball fans for the embarrassment I have caused them," he said. "I also want to tell anyone that is an Andy Pettitte fan I am sorry, especially any kids that might look up to me."

He said he was a "nervous wreck" and "scared to death" before the news conference, held under a tent behind the third-base side of Legends Field. He relaxed after a few minutes and went into far greater detail than most accused athletes have about their transgressions.

"We've been through a lot of tough times in baseball. Why not support him?" Rivera said. "I consider Andy my friend. I'm glad I was there."

Brian McNamee, the former personal trainer to Pettitte and Clemens, said in the Mitchell Report that Pettitte used HGH in 2002 while with the Yankees. Two days after the report was released Dec. 13, Pettitte issued a statement through his agent confirming McNamee's account and saying that was the only time he used HGH.

In a deposition and an affidavit to a congressional committee two weeks ago, Pettitte said he injected himself with HGH for one day in 2004 while with the Astros after obtaining two syringes from his father.

"I am sorry for not telling the whole truth in my original statement," Pettitte said. "I never wanted to bring my dad into a situation like this. This was between me and him, and no one else. I testified about my dad in part because I felt in my heart I had to, but mainly because he urged me to tell the truth, even if it hurt him."

Pettitte said there were no other times he used performance-enhancing drugs.

"That's it. There are no other surprises out there," he said. "That's all there is and anything that would come up would be definitely false allegations."

McNamee said he injected Clemens with steroids and HGH at least 16 times from 1998-01, and all three were among those called before a congressional committee. Pettitte told Congress that Clemens had discussed nearly a decade ago using HGH.

In addition, Pettitte testified McNamee, the former personal trainer for Clemens and Pettitte, had spoken in 2003 or 2004 about steroids use by Clemens.

Clemens claims Pettitte "misremembers."

"I'm just not going to go there," Pettitte said. "I've had to testify under oath. So has Roger. And, you know, I don't think that's anything I need to sit here and try to elaborate on with anyone else."

He "prayed awfully hard" to be dropped from testifying at last Wednesday's hearing. Pettitte was excused from testifying in public alongside Clemens and McNamee, and said he didn't watch the hearing.

Pettitte realizes he may have to testify again, either in Clemens' defamation suit against McNamee or if the Justice Department launches a criminal case against Clemens or McNamee.

"He can't put this behind him because of Roger's selfishness and inability to admit the facts," Richard Emery, one of McNamee's lawyers, said in a telephone interview. "Clemens is putting Andy in the middle of a meatgrinder again. He's going to have to testify again in a deposition, probably this summer, and it's going to be far more extensive than anything Congress did. He is the key witness."

Joe Householder, Clemens' spokesman, declined comment.

Given permission to report four days after other Yankees pitchers, Pettitte threw 35 pitches during a bullpen session at the minor league complex before the news conference. He acknowledged he had considered not playing because of the ongoing situation.

Pettitte plans to apologize to his teammates. He met with George Steinbrenner and the owner's sons, Hank and Hal, before facing reporters.

"I just wanted to tell them face to face that I'm sorry and apologize to him, you know, for the embarrassment that this has brought," Pettitte said. "He was a little stubborn in accepting my apology and said that he's behind me 100 percent, tried to tell me that I haven't brought any embarrassment to the organization. But I disagree with him a little on that."

The 35-year-old lefty with 201 regular-season wins and four World Series championship rings said he did not feel as if his accomplishments were tainted. He said he used HGH only because he felt pressure to pitch while injured because of his multimillion salary and doesn't consider himself a cheater because HGH wasn't banned until 2005.

"I didn't do it to try to get an edge on anyone. I didn't do it to try to get stronger or faster or throw harder," he said. "I did it because I was told that it might be able to help me."

Schilling to follow advice on shoulder

FORT MYERS, Fla. (AP)—Curt Schilling finally faced reporters on Monday - and an uncertain future. If the shoulder rehabilitation he reluctantly agreed to fails, he knows his brilliant career could be over.

The one-time Red Sox ace also denied that he was hurt when he signed an $8 million contract last November.

Speaking publicly for the first time about his preference for surgery, Boston's 41-year-old right-hander said he had to follow the team's insistence on rehab because he is under contract.

"I don't have any choice. If their course of action doesn't work I don't pitch this year, and I may never pitch again," Schilling said. "I have to mentally get behind it and do everything I can do to make it work."

Team owner John Henry said he thought rehabilitation was the best treatment and, from what he's heard, there's "a reasonably good chance" that Schilling will pitch this season.

The club and the pitcher hope he can return around the All-Star break.

"He shouldn't be upset because we're trying to do what's in the best interests of Curt and the team," Henry said in a three-minute interview after Schilling, usually drawn to the media spotlight but wary of being a distraction now, spoke to reporters. "So I heard the arguments and I felt we were doing the right thing."

Schilling could see why Henry feels rehab is best.

"When you understand the depths of the different diagnosis, the incredible variations in potential treatments and timetables you should be able to understand to some degree why I might be upset at being forced to take this course of action," Schilling said in an e-mail to The Associated Press. "That being said, that process is over and right now I am focused on trying to find out as quickly as possible whether or not this course of action will work."

Red Sox team physician Dr. Thomas Gill recommended rehab for the tendon injury. Schilling sought a second opinion from Dr. Craig Morgan, who operated on the right shoulder in 1995 and 1999. Morgan felt strongly that surgery was best and that rehabilitation would fail and end Schilling's career.

A third doctor, New York Mets team physician Dr. David Altchek, was consulted. He said Schilling had a rotator cuff injury as well as the tendon problem and he felt surgery would sideline the pitcher for the season, according to Morgan.

Schilling repeatedly has expressed great faith in Morgan and said Monday surgery would be done at some point. But, he said, he's hasn't thought or talked about how what happens this year might affect his decision on whether to play in 2009.

"When you consider the different opinions on my arm, I may not have any real input as to whether I pitch or not next year, if that's what I wanted to do," Schilling said in his e-mail. "If Dr. Altchek is correct and I have significant rotator cuff damage then I have thrown my last pitch.

"If Dr. Morgan and Dr. Gill are correct and my cuff is unchanged over the past few years then that opens up another list of possibilities. Much of it will depend on the next 4-6 weeks I would imagine."

From June 19 to Aug. 6 last season, Schilling was on the disabled list with what the Red Sox said was tendinitis in his right shoulder. He finished the season at 9-8 with a 3.47 ERA in 24 starts, then had another outstanding postseason - 3-0 in four starts, including a 2-1 win in Game 2 of the World Series.

Schilling, who earned $13 million last year, then agreed to an $8 million contract on Nov. 6. It includes an additional $3 million in potential performance bonuses and $2 million if he meets certain weight benchmarks - $333,333 for each time he passes one of six random monthly weigh-ins.

"If some people want to believe this was me taking advantage of the situation financially, I wouldn't have done it here. I would have done it in at least two other places for $14 million," said Schilling, who was a free agent after the season. "I was healthy at the time. I didn't feel great, but I felt like I was 40 or 41."

He said he passed every test he was asked to take.

Henry said he didn't think Schilling deceived the team about his health.

"I have no reason to believe at this point that any such thing occurred," the owner said.

Schilling said he took about five weeks off after the season before throwing in mid-December when the shoulder "felt like it was August again. It didn't hurt but it felt crappy."

He rested some more before throwing again in early to mid-January.

But, "I just couldn't play catch," Schilling said. "When I went home that night it was painful just laying around. It was aching, almost like a toothache."

At one point, he said, he felt "there was some belief" by the club that he would have surgery on his own. But "I assured anybody I was talking to that I would never do that."

So now Schilling is rehabbing and hoping to play in the 21st season of a career in which his 3,116 strikeouts are 14th most in baseball history and his 11-2 postseason record is the best of any pitcher with at least 10 decisions.

He has a career record of 216-146 with a 3.46 ERA and an award as co-MVP of the 2001 World Series. And he was instrumental in the Red Sox championships of 2004 and 2007.

Now he can't even throw a ball without pain.

"I'm disappointed that after 21 years my career might end like this," Schilling said. "And if I never pitch again, as disappointing as it may be, I have no regrets about everything that I've been able to experience."

All-Star game not the same without Shaq

NEW ORLEANS (AP)—Larger-than-life likenesses of Tim Duncan, Kevin Garnett and Dwight Howard—a trilogy of NBA giants—adorn one side of a downtown hotel. They tower over trolleys and tourists on Canal Street along the French Quarter's fringe.

The mammoth images of the All-Stars are impressive and imposing, yet somehow seem incomplete. Someone, a very big someone, is absent from the monstrous montage—one Shaquille Rashaun O'Neal.

You know, Shaq.

For the first time since announcing his arrival in the league as a rookie by tearing down two backboards, O'Neal aka "The Diesel," aka "The Big Aristotle," aka "The Big Daddy," aka "Wilt Chamberneezy," aka "The Real Deal," and recently self-dubbed "The Big Cactus" after being traded to the Phoenix Suns, isn't an All-Star. His streak of a record-tying 14 straight selections was halted by an injury-plagued first half.

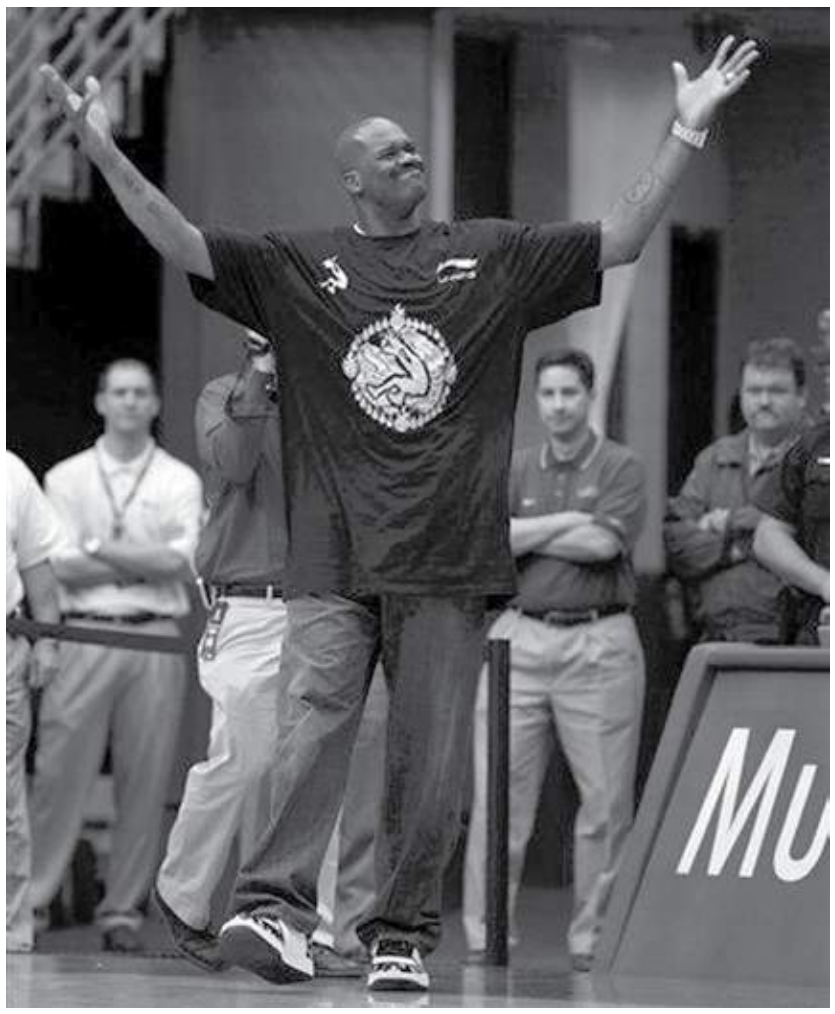
"We miss him," Denver's Carmelo Anthony said. "He's our godfather. It don't feel right without having him here."

No, it doesn't.

Although he's been seen around the Big Easy, hosting a celebrity-studded party with Saints running back Reggie Bush the other night, O'Neal has kept a low profile—for him—during this weekend's festivities.

However, O'Neal's presence looms.

During Friday's media availability, All-Stars from both conferences talked about O'Neal's absence, his historic impact, and how despite being in the winter of his playing career he could still carry a team to a title.



AP

Former LSU basketball player Shaquille O'Neal motions to the crowd during the second half of a college basketball game between Louisiana State and Kentucky Saturday, Feb. 16, 2008 in Baton Rouge, La. Kentucky won 67-63.

And yet what many players focused on was Shaq's indomitable personality. How he lights up a room or arena wherever he goes. He may be the most loved player of his generation, and once he leaves the game, he will leave a gaping hole unlike any before.

O'Neal will be missed by everyone.

When that day arrives, Allen Iverson was asked who might be able to replace the four-time champion, who will turn 36 in a few weeks.

"I don't think nobody can fill those shoes," Iverson said, laughing when he realized he meant that both literally and figuratively. "Those are some big shoes."

Iverson feels O'Neal is as irreplaceable as a stolen Picasso.

"Everybody wants to play with Shaq," he said. "Everybody wants to be around Shaq. He's just a good guy on and off the floor. He's the best there will ever be at that position. When you talk about Shaq, I think you can put his name with Wilt Chamberlain and Bill Russell. He's one of the best who ever lived."

In the record books, O'Neal's name rests alongside—and in many cases above—the other great centers in league history. But beyond the statistics, what separates O'Neal from the others may be that no one this side of the Harlem Globetrotters has had such a good time dominating.

Always a class act, he's also the class clown. At last year's All-Star game he engaged in a breakdancing contest with Howard and LeBron James, who eventually gave up trying to match the big man's moves.

"We all wish he was here," James said.

The trade that sent O'Neal from Miami to Phoenix came on the heels of Pau Gasol's acquisition by the Los Angeles Lakers. It's as if there's an ongoing arms race in the tougher-than-tough Western Conference. A possible deal sending Jason Kidd from New Jersey back to Dallas that's currently snagged would further tip the NBA's power structure to the left of the Mississippi.

O'Neal, who injured his hip diving for a loose ball against Utah in December, is expected to make his debut with the Suns on Wednesday against the Lakers, the team he helped lead to three NBA titles.

Before even stepping on the floor, O'Neal has had a positive impact on the Suns.

"He's been amazing," said point guard Steve Nash, a two-time MVP. "He's charismatic and he has a great personality. That's what's exciting to our team. With the skills that he brings to our team, we're all excited about the prospects."

If O'Neal is healed, and if the Suns can alter their fast-paced offense to suit him, they could be the team to beat. Although some feel O'Neal's best days are behind him, Iverson says a committed O'Neal can still do damage.

"You definitely root for him," Iverson said, "and I think the whole thing with Shaq is just being healthy. You can talk about age all you want, but if he' 100 percent healthy, then he's going to dominate.

"It's easy for people to talk about how his game is decreasing because of he's getting older, but I think his health has a lot to do with it."

Bears release veteran WR Muhsin Muhammad

CHICAGO (AP)—The Chicago Bears released former Pro Bowl wide receiver Muhsin Muhammad on Monday, cutting the veteran after three seasons.

Chicago also gave defensive end Alex Brown a two-year contract extension, declined a $5.2 million option on defensive tackle Darwin Walker, and released veteran offensive tackle Fred Miller.

"Anytime a guy of Moose's stature is released, it's a surprise," said agent Joel Segal, who represents both Muhammad and Brown. "It's good timing for Moose because it's on the cusp of free agency. It gives him time to sign with another team."

He called Brown's deal a "win-win for both sides."

Muhammad spent his first nine seasons with the Carolina Panthers and made two Pro Bowls, but was released in February 2005 after setting career highs with 1,405 yards receiving and 16 touchdowns. He immediately signed a six-year contract with the Bears, but his numbers dropped dramatically in Chicago.

He caught 40 passes for 570 yards and three touchdowns as the Bears went 7-9 last season, and given his age—he turns 35 in May—the move wasn't shocking. The timing was a bit curious, though, given that leading receiver Bernard Berrian is considered one of the top free agents.

Segal said there has been no contact with other teams, but "I'm sure my phone will start ringing tonight."

Muhammad's best season with the Bears was in 2006, when had 863 yards and five touchdowns while helping the Bears reach the Super Bowl. That was an improvement over his first season in Chicago (750 yards and four touchdowns), but nothing like his final year with the Panthers. In 12 seasons, Muhammad has 742 receptions for 9,934 yards and 56 touchdowns.

Brown, who had two years left on his contract, wasn't thrilled when the coaches handed Mark Anderson the starting job at right defensive end in training camp. Brown wound up with 58 tackles and 4 1/2 sacks last season after 71 and seven in 2006. Anderson struggled against the run, and injuries and poor execution left a once-dominant defense vulnerable.

The Bears believed they landed a solid replacement for Tank Johnson when they acquired Walker from the Buffalo Bills. He signed a five-year, $25-million contract two days after the trade, but knee and elbow problems limited him to 33 tackles and one sack in 11 games.

Agent Albert Irby said the injuries were "just nagging types of things" and his client is fine.

"It's the Bears' choice," he said. "It's the way the business goes. That's their decision."

Miller started 46 games in three seasons with the Bears and has started 160 of his last 161 overall. A 12-year veteran, he started in Super Bowls with Chicago and the St. Louis Rams.

Galimberti guilty of betting on tennis

LONDON (AP)—Italian player Giorgio Galimberti was found guilty Monday of betting on tennis and was suspended for 100 days and fined $35,000. The ATP said Galimberti bet on tennis from June 2003 to January 2006 but did not specify if he bet on his own matches.

"Everyone connected to the ATP Tour has a duty to abide by the rules, especially those designed to protect and uphold the integrity of our sport, and the ATP will continue to instigate disciplinary proceedings against anyone found not to be doing so," said Gayle David Bradshaw, the ATP's executive vice president of rules and competition.

Galimberti is ranked No. 1,009, with his highest ranking No. 115 and his career singles record 9-21.

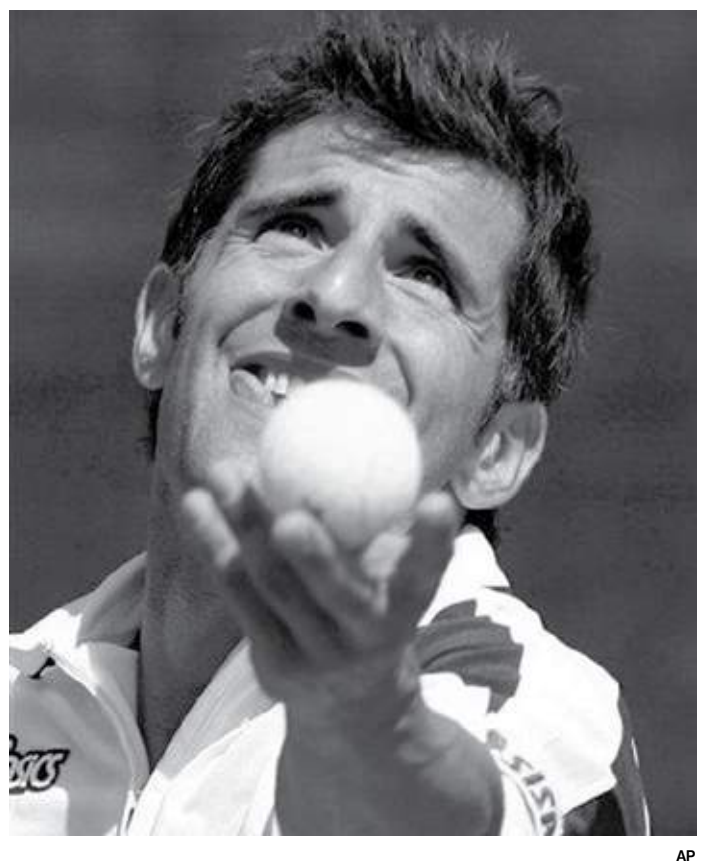
He is the fourth Italian player suspended for betting. Late last year, Potito Starace, Daniele Bracciali and Alessio Di Mauro were found guilty of gambling on matches involving other players.

Starace was suspended in December for six weeks and fined $30,000. Bracciali was banned for three months and fined $20,000. Di Mauro drew a nine-month suspension and $60,000 fine in November.

The governing body of men's tennis began its investigation of Galimberti in August 2007, and the findings were presented to an independent anti-corruption hearing officer.

"The ATP's Tennis Anti Corruption Program is clear in regards to gambling on tennis matches by ATP players, player associates and staff," Bradshaw said in a statement. "It unambiguously states that gambling on any form of tennis matches will not be tolerated."

Tennis has been hounded by match-fixing rumors since online betting exchange Betfair, in an unprecedented move, voided bets on a match in Poland last year after fourth-ranked Nikolay Davydenko withdrew against 87th-ranked Martin Vassallo Arguello in the third set because of a foot injury.



AP

Italy's Giorgio Galimberti prepares to serve the ball to Luxembourg's Gilles Kremer during the Davis Cup match between Italy and Luxembourg, in Torre Del Greco, southern Italy in this April 9, 2006 file photo.

In response to both the Davydenko match and other players speaking out about being approached by outsiders trying to influence a match, the ATP and other tennis governing bodies have been working together to keep the sport clean.

This month, French Open organizers filed suit in a bid to ban online gambling companies from offering bets on the Grand Slam tournament.

15 other fighters win in 'The Uproar'

By JON PEREZ
jon_perez@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Last of two-part series

Fifteen other warriors showcased their mixed martial arts fighting skills on Saturday night as they recorded wins in the Rites of Passage IV: The Uproar held at the Trench Tech Purebred Saipan Gym.

Trench Tech's Shane Alvarez and Carl Jesse Takai of Team Haga opened up the event with the former winning with two minutes and two seconds left in the first round. Alvarez used a rear-naked choke to beat Takai.

Gino Asanuma, meanwhile, made it back-to-back for Trench Tech fighters when he beat independent warrior Gregory Camacho. Asanuma won after Camacho decided not to continue with the fight.

The first round has just ended and the second round was about to start when Camacho decided to call off the fight.

Zalaka's Lyle Deleon Guerrero needed the judges' scorecards to defeat Jess Santos, while Haga's Perry Takai won his match against Pwang's Raegan Mality after the latter decided to call it quits heading into the second round.

J.J. Mality waved Team Pwang's banner high when he forced Peter Borja of Trench Tech to tap out via rear-naked choke with 1:27 left in the first round.

South Side Syndicate's Rick San Nicolas outsmarted Ron Chisato when he used an arm lock to force his opponent to submission with 2:52 gone in the second round.

Trench Tech's Tom Kim won by knockout against Pwang's Peter Keju with 22 seconds gone in the first round. Chris Layug was also in a hurry when he only needed 49 seconds to beat Ben Mettao of Zalaka using a head-arm triangle.

Independent fighter A.J. Cepeda forced Johmar Untalan of 670 Gladiators to tap out with 2:59 left in the first round, while Stan Iakopo recorded his first win when he beat Arnold Balbin. Iakopo, who improved to 1-1, used a choke to force Balbin to tap out with 49 seconds gone in the first round.

Japan's Joji Matsunaga made his trip to Saipan worthwhile when he beat Faustino Litulumar of Zalaka. Litulumar opted not to continue the match after the first round.

Alex Takeao scored Pwang's second win of the night when Alvin Taitano decided to throw in the towel going into the second round of their match, while the same thing happened in the next match when Joe Rabauliman won over Mark Hapdei after the latter opted not to continue with their match after two rounds.

According to one of the judges' scorecards, Hapdei and Rabauliman were tied at 19-19 after two rounds when the former decided to call it quits going into the third and final round.

Predator's Jeff Norita won over Ton Cabrera of No Team via referee stoppage with 2:45 left in the first round, while Nate Flores won against C.J. Kladikim with their match going to the judges' scorecards.

JON PEREZ
Nate Flores, left, looks for an opening as he tries to make the first move in his match against C.J. Kadikim in Saturday's Rites of Passage IV: The Uproar at the Trench Tech Purebred Gym.

"Badd" Brad Palacios defeated Matai Charley in what could have been one of the greatest mixed martial arts fights in Rites of Passage history. Palacios defeated Charley via majority decision in the main event.

In the semi-main event, veteran fighter J.D. "Out" Reyes foiled the MMA debut of amateur boxer Conrad "The Ex-Con" Iba of Team Tinian. Reyes defeated his opponent after Iba tapped out after a hard body slam with two minutes and four seconds gone in the first round.

Rites of Passage is the proving grounds for up-and-coming young warriors who want to test their MMA skills in front of a smaller crowd and see whether they could make it to big no-holds barred fights inside the octagon.

Rookie warriors who win their fights would get the chance to earn an invitation to Trench Warz VIII, which is tentatively set on June 8.

For more information, call Alvarez at 483-4MMA or 483-4662.

EVENFLOW

From Page 28

first set, 26-12. No-Use had a 14-point lead going into the second set when it seemed as though the floor dropped out from under them.

In the second set, Evenflow was on a groove and they defeated No-Use, 25-4. The second set victory put Evenflow on top at 37-30 in game points.

In the third set, Evenflow had a 19-9 lead but ran out of gas, as No-Use came from behind to tie the score at 19-19. No-Use took the lead on a two-point backcourt score, 21-19. But No-Use shanked a serve, lost a point, and Evenflow picked up momentum, regained the lead at 21-20, and fought their way to a 25-23 third set win.

In what turned out to be the final set of the 2008 season, Evenflow took an early lead and extended it to 18-6.

It looked as if they were going to glide into victory and the championship.

However, No-Use didn't cave in, and behind a series of two-point backcourt scoring by J.R. Rudolph, made a strong comeback and closed the point difference to just four points, 25-21.

No-Use fought hard to regain the lead, but Evenflow wouldn't submit and hung on to finally win the fourth set and juice-out No-Use, 34-26, for the set, game, and championship title.

The MVP award for the 2008 season went to Typhoon Saito of Evenflow who scored 10 two-point aces, 30 two-point backcourt scores, and three three-point goals in the final five games of the year.

TWO

From Page 28

Department of Public Safety officer's rolls of 235, 151, 246, and 219 allowed him to average 212.75.

Another national bowler, Raymond Angeles, came in fourth with his 837 total and 209.25 average (202, 254, 179, and 202), while rounding out the Top 5 was Joe Sablan, whose 181, 211, 218, and 213 was good for an 823-pinfall total and 205.75 average.

Zapanta earned $100 for his first place finish, while Eparwa, Manacop, and Angeles pocketed $50, $30, and $15, respectively.

In the Budweiser Queen of the Lanes Tenpin Bowling Tournament, Elena Soll prevented a Zapanta family sweep of the February tournaments when she crushed the 676 rolled by Gigi Zapanta Sunday with her 697 Monday.

Soll was superb in the final day of the monthly women's tournament, obliterating 182, 168, 180, and 167 in her four games to wound up with a 174.25 average.

Gigi settled for second place after her string of 131, 177, 228, and 140—good for a 169 average—was trumped by Soll.

Gloria Omechalang finished third with her 678 total and 168 average built around a four-game series of 163, 168, 168, and 173.

Soll, Zapanta, and Omechalang went home with $60, $40, and $20, respectively.

The MARPAC-sponsored monthly competition for men and women received a total of 43 entries.

Last Sunday also at the Capital Bowling Center, Raphael Zapanta won the first-ever Bing Energy Drink Prince/Princess of the Lanes Tenpin Bowling Tournament after toppling 651 pins in four games for a 162.75 average.

Like the Budweiser King and Queen of the Lanes, the Bing Prince/Princess of the Lanes is sponsored by MARPAC.

TSUNAMI

From Page 28

many friends with the YMCA students. The evening before the Osaka YMCA students' departure, both teams enjoyed a dinner together, hosted by the Osaka YMCA at the Kimpachi Restaurant in Garapan," said Kimura.

Osaka YMCA was established in 1882. There are currently 15 branches around the Kansai area in Japan. The YMCA offers many courses in water sports, including a swimming instructor course, aquatic sports trainer course, scuba diving instructor course, and other water sports courses.

Some of the graduates from this college have become members of the Japan Olympic Synchronized Swimming Team, others have gone on to become head coaches of swim teams at U.S. mainland universities.

Mr. Fukuda said, "We are looking forward to visiting Tsunami Saipan every year. Our kids enjoyed their visit so much and had a great experience with the Tsunami Saipan kids. After becoming a teacher or trainer, this experience will be useful for them in the future."

"Their synchronized swimming show was very entertaining. Almost all of our kids have never seen this style of swimming before. Both Tsunami Saipan kids and parents now understand there is not only ocean swimming, pool swimming, but also how to enjoy other types of swimming," said Kimura.

Now that the YMCA students have left, Tsunami Saipan is concentrating on practicing for the upcoming Saipan International Swim Meet. The results of this meet will help the swimmers qualify for the short course championships to be held in Guam in April 2008.

JOHN

From Page 28

"I was not even given a technical foul in that game. I did not even talk back or even threaten the referees. I think [the] five-year ban is too harsh. [Now] I'm going to start playing golf," he added.

Sablan said he is wondering why BANMI is trying to label their team and its members as troublemakers. "Why is BANMI trying to put our team as troublemakers? I don't know BANMI's basis before reaching the decision of suspending me for five years.

"I don't know where they came up with their basis with the harsh suspension on me, my brother, cousin, and uncle. That is fine with me," said Sablan, who will no longer appeal the BANMI ruling.

"If that is how dirty basketball is going to be, I don't want to be a part of it. I think that when the referees' issue went public, this pissed off BANMI and the referees association. [Maybe] that is why they decided to give me a five-year ban," said Sablan, who added he has yet to receive BANMI's letter stating why he was given the five-year suspension.

He said even Saipan Stevedore Suns coach Sonny Flores asked him why he was not going to appeal his case. In which he replied: "I don't want to waste my time. I have a death on my family and kids and other stuff on my mind."

Sablan, however, is not totally closing the doors to basketball. "It does not say that I can't coach. I'm going to concentrate [coaching] the kids. And hopefully after a few years I am eligible to play in the Masters League."

Cousins John and Henry Sablan were given five-year suspensions, while Josh Sablan was meted out a one-year ban. Their uncle, Felix Palacios, was given a lighter sentence and would only have to sit out for six months.

BANMI also decided to permanently ban Team Ulloa's with the remaining players, other than those suspended, free to reorganize under a different team name or join other teams.

This is not the first time that BANMI suspended a player. In June 2005, BANMI also suspended Fred Pelisamen and Henry Sablan for unsportsmanlike conduct in the BANMI 25-and-under Basketball League.

Pelisamen was suspended for one year, while Henry Sablan was meted a lesser punishment and sat out the season for a few months.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	41	9	.820	–
Toronto	28	23	.549	13 1/2
New Jersey	23	30	.434	19 1/2
Philadelphia	23	30	.434	19 1/2
New York	15	37	.288	27

Southeast Division

Orlando	33	21	.611	–
Washington	25	27	.481	7
Atlanta	21	28	.429	9 1/2
Charlotte	19	34	.358	13 1/2
Miami	9	42	.176	22 1/2

Central Division

Detroit	39	13	.750	–
Cleveland	29	23	.558	10
Chicago	21	31	.404	18
Indiana	21	32	.396	18 1/2
Milwaukee	19	34	.358	20 1/2

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Southwest Division

New Orleans	36	15	.706	–
San Antonio	34	17	.667	2
Dallas	35	18	.660	2
Houston	32	20	.615	4 1/2
Memphis	14	38	.269	22 1/2

Northwest Division

Utah	34	19	.642	–
Denver	32	20	.615	1 1/2
Portland	28	24	.538	5 1/2
Seattle	13	38	.255	20
Minnesota	10	41	.196	23

Pacific Division

Phoenix	37	16	.698	–
L.A. Lakers	35	17	.673	1 1/2
Golden State	32	20	.615	4 1/2
Sacramento	23	28	.451	13
L.A. Clippers	17	33	.340	18 1/2

NBA LEADERS

Scoring

	G	FG	FT	PTS	AVG
James, Clev.	46	497	334	1392	30.3
Bryant, LAL	52	488	387	1455	28.0
Iverson, Den.	52	450	423	1379	26.5
Anthony, Den.	47	451	296	1233	26.2
Wade, Mia.	42	357	294	1022	24.3
Stoudemire, Phoe.	50	424	310	1162	23.2
Jefferson, N.J.	53	396	389	1221	23.0
Redd, Mil.	43	325	248	981	22.8
Nowitzki, Dall.	53	417	331	1206	22.8
Bosh, Tor.	46	346	340	1034	22.5
Yao, Hou.	51	402	328	1132	22.2
Davis, G.S.	52	393	227	1130	21.7
Howard, Orl.	54	397	377	1171	21.7
Boozer, Utah	52	470	186	1126	21.7
Maggette, LAC	41	270	311	886	21.6
Jamison, Wash.	52	412	215	1119	21.5
Butler, Wash.	43	348	179	921	21.4
Jefferson, Minn.	51	449	185	1083	21.2
Wallace, Char.	47	338	267	997	21.2
Jackson, G.S.	45	315	205	942	20.9

FG Percentage

	FG	FGA	PCT
Biedrins, G.S.	229	369	.621
Chandler, N.O.	234	386	.606
Howard, Orl.	397	660	.602
Stoudemire, Phoe.	424	718	.591
Childress, Atl.	200	341	.587
Lee, N.Y.	205	363	.565
Smith, Minn.	197	352	.560
Curry, N.Y.	256	464	.552
Garnett, Bos.	309	561	.551
Brewer, Utah	230	421	.546

Rebounds

	G	OFF	DEF	TOT	AVG
Howard, Orl.	54	198	591	789	14.6
Camby, Den.	49	164	539	703	14.3
Kaman, LAC	45	143	467	610	13.6
Chandler, N.O.	48	213	386	599	12.5
Jefferson, Minn.	51	206	410	616	12.1
Duncan, S.A.	47	153	386	539	11.5
Okafor, Char.	53	188	401	589	11.1
Yao, Hou.	51	161	390	551	10.8
Boozer, Utah	52	133	428	561	10.8
Jamison, Wash.	52	152	386	538	10.3

Assists

Nash, Phoe.	52	610	11.7
Paul, N.O.	49	535	10.9
Kidd, N.J.	51	530	10.4
Williams, Utah	53	514	9.7
Calderon, Tor.	51	452	8.9
Tinsley, Ind.	39	326	8.4
Davis, G.S.	52	422	8.1
Iverson, Den.	52	380	7.3
James, Clev.	46	335	7.3
Billups, Det.	50	353	7.1

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Three teams rout foes in Little League

By JON PEREZ
jon_perez@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Three teams defeated their opponents in convincing fashion as action in the Major Division of the Saipan Little League continued Monday at the Miguel "Tan Ge" Pangelinan Field.

Saipan Little League Baseball Association officials took advantage of Presidents Day Monday and played games in the four divisions at the Tan Ge and Francisco M. Palacios Baseball fields.

Leading the victors in the one-sided contests were the defending champions SaipanCell Patriots, which scored a 17-2 rout of the AA Enterprises/TCC World Tanapag Braves on Monday.

It was the 41st straight win by the Patriots since the 2006 season when they won 15 consecutive regular season games and three off-season matches to clinch the title.

They followed it up with another undefeated season last year when they won 21 consecutive games to complete their back-to-back title bid.

The Patriots opened up the 2008 season with a 22-2 crushing of Hustlers I in an early rematch of last year's finals.

Team McDonald's handed the Patriots' last loss on May 1, 2005, which was the final day of the regular season. The Patriots, then sponsored by VFW, suffered a 3-12 crushing from McDonald's.

Fast forward to Monday afternoon at the Tan Ge field, the Patriots were all business as they made short work of the Tanapag Braves, using steady pitching and timely hitting to end the game after four innings via the 10-run mercy rule.

Chris Mizer and Jun Rabauliman led the Patriots' hitting spree all throughout the match as they left the Braves wondering what hit them.

Rabauliman went 4-for-4 with two runs, two doubles, two triples, and four RBIs with Mizer providing support at the plate and on the mound.

Mizer finished with a 3-for-4 in batting, scoring two runs, with a double, and an RBI while also preventing the Braves offense to create some damage.

Mizer, after allowing the Braves to score two runs on two hits in the bottom of the second, settled down after that to completely shut down the Tanapag crew's scoring threat. He had 10 strikeouts and three walks after the first inning.

The Braves' lone bright spot came in the bottom of the first. After brothers Lucio and K.J. Kalen struck out, Mizer walked Frankie Lieto to put a Tanapag runner on base.

Lieto, who advanced to third on a Ricky Joe Rengiil double, later scored on a pass ball. Rengiil tied the count at 2-2 when he touched home plate on a J.R. Jones single.

Roy Tudela ended the inning when he struck out.

JON PEREZ
Defending champion SaipanCell Patriots' pitcher Chris Mizer throws to batter Frankie Lieto of the Tanapag Braves in their game in the Major Division of the Saipan Little League last Monday at the Miguel Basa "Tan Ge" Pangelinan Field.

Hustlers 18, Kagman Little Lions 1

Raymund Saralu pitched in no relief for the UMDA Hustlers, limiting the Lions to five hits, while striking out eight batters and walking one.

Audelbert Lizama went 4-for-4 with two doubles and a triple, while also scoring four runs and had one RBI. Joshua Dela Cruz, 4-for-4, supported him by scoring three runs on two triples with two RBIs.

Jesse Santos scored Kagman's lone run when he crossed home plate on a Justin Santos single in the first inning.

Twins 16, McDonald's 9

Ian Lizama and Robert Tudela shared pitching duties to help the Wells Fargo As Matuis Twins beat McDonald's.

Tudela closed out for the Wells Fargo-backed Twins and nearly allowed McDonald's to mount a comeback in the bottom of the fifth and sixth innings.

Leading 12-6, Tudela gave up three runs on three hits to McDonald's in the fifth to allow their opponents close in.

Tudela put the Twins on out away from victory after forcing Josh Villagomez to ground out to first then struck out Ian Rogolifoi. He gave up a hit to Ken Taguchi, who tripled to right field, then walked Herman Guerrero to put runners on the corners giving McDonald's a new lease of life.

Taguchi and Guerrero, however, were left stranded on base when Jonathan Rangamar grounded out to second to end the game.

Ol'Aces 9, Pirates 7

Jeremy Lizama belted the league's first inside-the-park home run of the season to help the Happy Market/L&Y Corp. Ol'Aces beat the Kautz Glass Pirates.

Lizama, who went 1-for-3, had the home run as his lone hit in his last at bat in the top of the seventh after the game went into extra innings. The match ended in a 7-7 tie after six complete innings.

T.J. Sablan pitched four innings and Davey Matagolai relieved him in the fifth before Lizama closed out for the Twins to completely shut down the Pirates' offense. He had six strikeouts in the sixth and seventh.

BANMI referees asking for donation

By JON PEREZ
jon_perez@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Basketball Association of the Northern Mariana Islands Referees Association is asking the community for any amount that they can donate to help the family of the late Rick Alegre.

Alegre passed away last week after suffering what could have been a heart attack during defending champion Aqua Resort Club's game against Hyatt Regency Saipan in the 2nd Annual HANMI Cup Inter-Hotel Basketball League at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

BANMI referees association vice president Arnold Mesa said they are reaching out to all athletes and sports officials not only in basketball to donate any amount.

"Our friend left us in the line of duty," said Mesa of Alegre's passing. Aside from being a player, Alegre is also a certified referee and also coached the Marianas Baptist Academy Stormz to the Private School League boys crown last year.

"We make a living on what we earn and we make a life on what we give."

Mesa said donations can be given to referees association president Rufino Aguon at anytime until Thursday at the Northern Marianas College Gymnasium.

Aside from Mesa and Aguon, other certified referees in the CNMI are Manny Sitchon, Noel Delos Santos, Eric Artillaga, Gilbert Espinosa, Dado Vistal, Mike White, Abner Venus, Jess Pabula, Joe Mettao, Connie Camacho, Tony Rogolifoi, and BANMI president Elias Rangamar.

Aguon and Rangamar are BANMI/FIBA Level I instructors.

HANMI Cup coordinator Lito Espino also sent out letters to all participating hotels in the Inter-Hotel Basketball League to ask for donations to help Alegre's family.

Alegre's family would also like to announce that the final viewing for Rick's remains will be held from 11:30am to 1pm at the Commonwealth Health Center Chapel.

From CHC Chapel, Alegre's remains will be transported at the Pentecostal Church in San Jose where it would stay up to 12midnight.

Alegre's remains will then be repatriated for burial in his hometown of San Fernando, La Union on Saturday.

HANMI Cup suspends games today

By JON PEREZ
jon_perez@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Games in the 2nd Annual HANMI Cup Inter-Hotel Basketball League remain suspended to allow players and teammates to pay their respects to the late Rick Alegre, who passed away last Wednesday during the Aqua Resort Club-Hyatt Regency Saipan game.

HANMI Cup coordinator Lito Espino said the scheduled matches today will be played next Wednesday, Feb. 27. He said they would no longer change the current league schedule and simply decided to push back all the matches to a week.

The games resume on Sunday with the scheduled tripleheader on Feb. 17 to be followed. League-leading Fiesta-Grand Hotel will take on dangerous Hafadai Beach Hotel in the 3pm opener.

Defending champion Aqua Resort Club, meanwhile, will try to bounce back from the death of its team captain and loss to Hyatt Regency last week when they face Pacific Islands Club at 4:30pm. Saipan World Resort battles Aquarius Beach Tower in the 6pm final game.

Today's scheduled games between Fiesta-Grand and World Resort, and Hyatt and Hafadai will be played on Feb. 27, Wednesday, at the same time.

Fiesta-Grand currently leads the seven-team field with a league best 6-1 slate followed by defending champion Aqua Resort Club's 5-2 mark. PIC is third with a 4-2 record.

Hyatt Regency (4-3) and Hafadai (3-3) are battling it out for the fourth and final playoff spot. World Resort holds a 2-5 record with Aquarius bringing up the rear with a winless 0-6 slate.

The Top 4 teams after the double-elimination round will advance to the semifinals with the top seed facing the fourth ranked squad while No. 2 takes on No. 3 in a pair of knockout matches.

The losers will play in the consolation game while the winners will vie for the title in a one-game finals match.

The No. 1 team after the elimination round will also win the pennant. In case of a tie the quotient system will be used.

JON PEREZ
Hyatt Regency Saipan's Edmark Mendoza, with ball, tries to go for a baseline drive against the defense of Glen Aquino of Aqua Resort Club in their game in the 2nd Annual HANMI Cup Inter-Hotel Basketball League last week at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

Senate prexy is February Ace

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSISTANT EDITOR

Senate President Pete Reyes won Fil-Taga Golfers Association February Ace of the Month Tournament held last Sunday, Feb. 17, at the Laolao Bay Golf Resort east course.

Reyes took a break from his lawmaking duties to shoot the winning net score of 70 after the 11-handicap golfer carded a gross score of 81.

Two shots off Reyes' pace and settling for second place was the club's funnyman Mike Cruz, who was good for a net 72 built around a handicap of 20 and a gross of 92.

Fr. Manny Corcuera continued to receive blessings from above and finished in third place with a net score of 72. The 11-handicap golfer fired gross score of 84.

Nestor "Dodong" Siruelo and John Matsumoto complete the Top 5 with a net score of 74 each. Siruelo shot his 74 after a gross of 90, while Matsumoto had a pre-handicap score of 95.

Thirteen other weekend warriors took part in the Fil-Taga Golfers Association February Ace of the Month Tournament—Nono Bostre (net 75), Rey Ferraz (76), Henry Bautista (78), George Sablan (79), Jhun Calma (81), Manny Po (81), Freddie Cataluna (83), Mando Guban (84), Jun Dela Cruz (88), Leo Ganacias (gross 77), and Dan Ganacias (gross 98).

Fil-Taga's officers are led by president Jun Dela Cruz Jr., vice-president Jhun Calma, secretary Manny Po, and treasurer Guban.

Its board of directors is made up of Fr. Manny Corcuera, Miguel Cruz, Jr., Ted Malaran, Gil Faller, Rey Ferraz, Greg De Torres, Rene Batallones, Nestor Siruelo, and George Sablan

Established in 1993, Fil-Taga's tournaments operate under a computer-controlled handicap system that creates parity among players in the A and B Flights.

A Fil-Taga Ace of the Month champion is crowned monthly. Regular tournaments are scheduled once a month, normally every third Sunday. Green fees are in the $35 to $40 price range for most tournaments.

Three teams rout foes in Little League

Three teams defeated their opponents in convincing fashion as action in the Major Division of the Saipan Little League continued Monday at the Miguel "Tan Ge" Pangelinan Field.

27

Saipan Tribune
Sports

Pettitte apologizes, regrets taking HGH

Andy Pettitte had finished 55 1/2 minutes of apologies, explaining why he used human growth hormone and why he said what he did about Roger Clemens.

24

Evenflow rallies to win title

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSISTANT EDITOR

Evenflow came back from a two-games-to-none deficit in their best-of-three final series against No-Use to win the 2007-2008 World Organized Rocball Community League Monday night at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.

Thus after four months of competition that saw 18 teams and 140 players take part in 70 games of the CNMI indigenous sport, Evenflow found its way to the top of the Rocball universe but not after a monumental uprising that allowed them to take the final three games of the championship series after dropping the first two.

No-Use actually had a chance to knock off Evenflow and win the championship in Game 4 when they led their opponents in game points, 75-65, at the end of the third set of play.

In order to win the game and the championship, all No-Use had to do was win the set. Meanwhile, in order for Evenflow to block No-Use from juicing out and sending the game into overtime, it had to win the fourth set by any margin less than 11 points.

In order for Evenflow to extend the series and force a Game 5, Evenflow needed to win the fourth set of the fourth game by 11 or more points.

No-Use won the first set, 25-16, but Evenflow came back to win the second, 27-25. No-Use returned the favor in the third set, winning 25-22.

All the cards were stacked up against Evenflow's favor in the fourth, as No-Use didn't have a reputation of losing sets by double digits.

Nonetheless, it doesn't hurt to try and Evenflow did just that, taking on a solid No-Use team head on in the fourth.

It also helped that Evenflow would hold serve and in a previous match, it scored an 11-point winning margin.

At the start, No-Use was able to score and take control of the serve. But Evenflow played hard defense and made a lot of two-point backcourt plays and a three-point goal to shut down No-Use's scoring power and went on to win the fourth set, 25-11.

Evenflow's 14-point margin was enough to juice-out and handed them the Game 4 victory.

In the fifth and final game, No-Use came out strong and slammed Evenflow in the

See EVENFLOW on Page 26

MARK RABAGO

Evenflow players pose for a photo after Game 2 of their best-of-five championship series against No-Use in the 2007-2008 World Organized Rocball Community League last Saturday at the Marianas High School Gymnasium. After dropping the first two games, Evenflow won the last three to take home the championship.

Two in a row for Raymond Zapanta

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSISTANT EDITOR

Two Budweiser King of the Lanes in 2008. Two wins for Raymond Zapanta.

The CNMI national bowler made it two in a row when he followed up his January triumph with a win in the February Budweiser King of the Lanes Tenpin Bowling Tournament last Monday at the Capital Bowling Center in Garapan.

The 874 pinfall total and 218.5 average Zapanta rolled last Sunday survived the night, as the Northern Marianas College second-year student captured the monthly title with nary a suspense.

Zapanta began Sunday's roll-off with a 247 and 229 in the first two games. He, however, encountered a speed bump in the third game, firing a pedestrian 176 before rebounding with a 222 in the fourth and final game.

Finishing second to Zapanta in the February tournament was Jon Eparwa, the same player who came in No. 2 Sunday. Eparwa was seven pins short of Zapanta's total after rolling a four-game series of 223, 202, 224, and 218 that gave him a 687 and 216.75 average.

National bowler Simon Manacop jumped from fifth to third after tattooing 851 pins on Monday. The

See TWO on Page 26

February Budweiser King and Queen of the Lanes Raymond Zapanta, right, and Elena Soll show off their winnings after Monday's tourna- ment at the Capital Bowling Center in Garapan.

MARK RABAGO

Tsunami Saipan hosts synchronized swimming team

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Osaka YMCA Sports College synchronized swimming team perform in front of members and parents of Swimming Center Tsunami Saipan earlier this month at the Kan Pacific Swimming Pool in Marpi.

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSISTANT EDITOR

Swimming Center Tsunami Saipan hosted the synchronized swimming team of Osaka YMCA Sports College earlier this month.

According to Tsunami Saipan head coach Hiro Kimura the team visits Saipan every year, where its students combine vacation with swim practice as well as enjoy the wide variety of water sports available in the CNMI.

This year, the 18 students and their chaperon chose to practice with and share tips with swimmers from Tsunami Saipan because their head master, Mr. Fukuda, has a close personal relationship with Kimura.

During the week of practice, Osaka YMCA's top swimmer Ken Yoshii swam against Tsunami Saipan's top swimmer Rezne Wong at the Kan Pacific Swimming Pool in Marpi..

According to Kimura, the friendly competition helped both swimmers improve. In addition to the swim practice, the Osaka YMCA students also conducted swimming lessons for Tsunami Saipan's beginners class.

They also presented a synchronized swimming show for Tsunami Saipan members and parents.

"The Osaka YMCA students had a great time with the Tsunami swimmers who did their best to be gracious hosts and made

See TSUNAMI on Page 26

John Sablan: I will abide by decision

By JON PEREZ
jon_perez@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

John Sablan said he and the entire Ulloa's team will accept the Basketball Association of the Northern Mariana Islands' decision suspending him for five years and barring the team from playing competitions sanctioned by the islands' governing body.

Sablan, in a telephone interview, said he has yet to receive a copy of BANMI's letter and he had only read BANMI's decision in the *Saipan Tribune*.

BANMI, in a written decision, banned the Ulloa's in all BANMI-organized or administered leagues and tournaments and also meted suspensions to Sablan, his brother Joshua, cousin Henry, and uncle Felix Palacios.

BANMI referees association president Rufino Aguon submitted the written report that included statements from the referees on the Jan. 21 Budweiser Cup match between the Ulloa's and the Southern Sonics, where a record five technical fouls were slapped against several players in a tightly fought and highly emotional playoff match.

The players involved and the entire team were given one month to appeal the BANMI ruling since BANMI's decision is not final.

"I am fine with [the decision]. I am done with playing. For me I didn't get any technical fouls during that game, what they gave me was a flagrant foul," said Sablan, who was given a five-year suspension in all BANMI-organized or administered league and tournaments along with his younger brother Joshua.

See JOHN on Page 26